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Edward Bellamy

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OAKWOOD HALL.

VOL. III.

OAKWOOD HALL,

A Novel;

INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF

THE LAKES

OF

CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORELAND,

AND

A PART OF SOUTH WALES.

By CATHERINE HUTTON,

AUTHOR OF "THE MISER MARRIED," AND

"THE WELSH MOUNTAINEER."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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OAKWOOD HALL.

LETTER XL.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Newport, Monmouthshire.

THE Lamb and Flag had been represented to me as a solitary house in the midst of the hills, where none but the weary traveller sought refreshment; I found it in a beautiful vale, with mines of coal and iron on each side, warehouses and workmen's houses around it, and a canal and railway at its feet. Nor were weary travellers the only

guests; for, it being Saturday evening, the house ran over with miners and colliers, who having received the payment of their week's labour, consumed the beer as fast as it could be given them. When an adequate portion of this liquor had been poured down their throats, they danced, together with their wives and daughters, till the arrival of Sunday put an end to their amusements. One thought occurred to these honest Welshmen that I believe never entered the breast of an English collier; they were afraid their noise would disturb the ladies; and they sent the landlord to ask whether it did. Poor fellows! Selfish must those ladies be who could have wished to silence them.

From the Lamb and Flag to the town of Neath, a distance of eleven miles, the road runs wholly through the vale; the river occupying the bottom, the canal

and rail-road the next station, a station I sometimes envied them, and our road traversing the foot of the hills, and often much higher than their foot. These hills, as far as I could see them, are covered with wood, which was sometimes impervious to the sun, and at others afforded an opening to the hills on the opposite side of the river. The latter receded at about nine miles distance from the Lamb and Flag, and we saw the town of Neath, springing out of the vale. Here the river Dulas joins the Neath; and a little to the right of the road it makes a beautiful fall in its passage down from the hills. The water was now trifling; but the guide assured me that three days before, without any rain having fallen in the vale, it would have covered my head where I then stood, which was as near

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OAKWOOD HALL.

VOL. III.

be reading, but must sometimes drink, there are nineteen public-houses ready for them in the High Street only, and twenty-five in the Strand. That there is a proportionate number in the other streets, I have no reason to doubt; because it was chance which directed me to enumerate these.

At Swansea there is a fine pier. There is a fine parade parallel with the shore and open to it, with a piece of broken greensward between. The coast of Devonshire is seen stretching across; the outline is distinct in clear weather; but the inequalities of the surface are not discernible. The nearest point, which is that of Ilfracombe, is eight leagues distant.

It would be ridiculous to judge of the people of South Wales from what appears in such a town as Swansea. Every creature with whom I had any

communication spoke English; those of the lower class with a foreign tone of voice, but in general with a proper pronunciation. They sound the *s* as our dramatic writers, from Shakespeare to the present day, make them, and would say, "thece cheeces," instead of "these cheeses:" as for the *hur* that is given them, I can only say, I never heard it among them. I noticed but one variation in the idiom; for, "go make haste," or, "come back," they would say, "go you, make you haste," or, "come you back."

I remarked that, even on Sunday, the women servants retained the beaver hat, and that it was the only badge of their country they had not laid aside. The countrywomen have universally given up the blue cloak, once dearer to them than shoes and stockings; and appear at market in a

woollen scarf of dingy scarlet, folded in the middle; the doubled end fastened round the throat, and the two fringes hanging down the back.

My intention was now to return by the great road as far as Newport, and from thence to go by Monmouth and Ross. The first stage was Pyle. The mouths of the Towey and the Neath are only five miles asunder, and Pyle is ten miles beyond the mouth of the Neath, and two from the coast. To those, therefore, who choose to drive through the former river at Swansea, which, at low water, I have seen a gentleman in a curricle do, and pass the latter river in a boat at Breton Ferry, the distance to Pyle is only fifteen miles. But many persons decline performing these exploits, and prefer the bridge over the Towey, in the road to Neath, and the bridge over

the Neath at the town itself; which makes the distance twenty-two. We were of this number.

The view from the lofty bank of the river, after we had left Neath, I can never forget. We looked back upon the town and castle, and beyond them, up the vale of the Lamb and Flag, with its magnificent boundaries. At Breton Ferry is a seat of Lord Vernon, rendered delightful by the sea, the mouth of a fine river, beautiful woods and open grounds; the rest of the world shut out by hills.

From hence to Margam, our road lay on the verge of Swansea Bay, which, from the Mumbles Point, its western extremity, is every where sprinkled with white houses of various dimensions; the retreats of generals, colonels, and captains, who, worn out, or fatigued with the toils of war, seek

peace for their latter days in this charming country. Before we quitted the sea, vast iron-works sent up their columns of smoke, produced by fires which, like those of the vestals, never go out.

The inn at Pyle is built under a wooded hill which has been cut down behind, leaving a semicircular lawn of turf, inclosed by a lofty wall of wood. This verdant amphitheatre is bordered by flowering shrubs; the path which leads to it is edged on either side with flowering plants in pots; and the buildings are covered with a variety of flowering creepers. To me, who am such an admirer of these beautiful works of nature, the place appeared like fairy land.

From Pyle we went to Cowbridge. Having crossed the Ogmore, and soon afterwards the Ewenny, which join a

little below, and proceed to the sea together, we crossed a vale, and began to mount the hill before us; and then, turning to the left, we skirted the side of the vale.

It was not among the probabilities of life that I should advance within thirty-four miles of Llandrindod, without being able to obtain any intelligence concerning it; and it was still less probable that I should meet with it here. I was contemplating the immense vale below me, adorned with towns and villages, dotted with white houses, and enclosed on the opposite side by a range of hills that would be no disparagement to mountains if I called them by that name, when a gentleman rode up close to the side of my gig. Stimulated by an eager curiosity, I forgot the impropriety of addressing a stranger, and I said,

"Pray, sir, is not that called the Vale of Glamorgan?"

"It is, Madam."

"And what town is that on the side of the opposite hill?"

"Berjen, Madam." [Bridgend, so pronounced] "You have been at Swansea, I presume," continued the gentleman.

"I have. I am travelling for health and amusement, and I am enraptured with South Wales."

"If you seek health in South Wales, you should have gone to Llandrindod Wells, where there are the finest waters and the finest air in the world. There is a chalybeate, a sulphurous, and a saline spring; and they are situated on a wide common under the Radnorshire mountains."

"Llandrindod is the very place I intended to go to; but the first stage

from Leominster was represented to me as nearly impassable, and the rest of the road was utterly unknown."

"The usual way is by Brecon and Builth; the road, though not very good, is used by all sorts of carriages; and the wells are frequented by very good company."

Had I met with this gentleman at Brecon, my bow would have been made to Mr. Llandrindod in person.—But then I should not have seen the Vale of Neath and the Bay of Swansea; so, perhaps, I have done better by deferring my visit to another day.

"Sir," said I to the stranger, "though it be now too late to profit by the information you have given me, you may yet point out the best way I can go to Worcester. All roads are alike to me, provided they are good, and the country interesting."

"I would advise you, by all means," replied the gentleman, "to go by Chepstow and Gloucester. The road is good, and the views between those two places are beautiful. You will have the Severn on one hand, and the Forest of Dean on the other."

After some other inquiries respecting present objects, I thanked my courteous companion for his information; he understood me, bowed, and rode on.

A rich descent from the summit of the hill brought us to Cowbridge, consisting of a straight street, on level ground, between the hill we had passed, and a loftier, called Sterling Down, which rose before us. It has frequently been said that there is no spot of natural ground from which one can see the distance of five miles in every direction. When I had reached the top of Sterling Down, as I gazed

with wonder at the hill beyond Pyle, behind me; the still enchanting vale, with its boundary of mountains, on my left; the Bristol Channel on my right, and part of Somersetshire before me; I exclaimed, "If there be a place where one can see five miles around, it is here!" We examined, and there was a spot towards the north-east, where the prospect appeared to be limited to two.

Were I to describe this country as I ought; were I to tell you of villages where every house is of a dazzling white, where every thatch is neat, where every cot has its garden of cabbages and onions, and every abode of competence its spreading roses and jessamines, its twining honey-suckles and creepers; it would sound like romance. Yet such are the habitations I continually saw between Cowbridge and

Cardiff. I even saw cottages with porticoes of thatch, supported by pillars of woodbine, and a beautiful house with a porch of the passion flower.

To enter the vale which had been so long the companion of our way, we wound down the side of a lofty hill. Two rivers, the Elay and the Taafe, lay between us and Cardiff; and though so near each other, they take separate courses to the sea. The town is situated upon the latter, and is more than a mile from its mouth.

Ancient castles are the never-failing attendants of the towns of South Wales. I suppose they must have been the residences of the native chieftains, and not, like those of North Wales, the badges of their subjugation. The castle of Cardiff made a striking appearance as we entered the town; but there was a

mystery in its architecture which I could not unravel. A noble tower of massive mould at either extremity carried me back to the days I have been speaking of, while the masonry that united them brought to mind the days of Elizabeth. I afterwards understood that the latter part had been erected by the present noble proprietor, with a design to make it a residence; but that finding he had either done too much for a castle, or too little for a house, he had abandoned the idea. An ancient entrance from the principal street opens, and the owner has the goodness always to let it open, to a beautiful lawn, on which is a tower of the same noble family as the two former.

Cardiff is the county town of Glamorganshire. It is busy and respectable. If delicacy be not essential to

female beauty, the women of Cardiff and its environs are eminently beautiful. Tall, straight, strong, and blooming, they march along the streets like grenadiers, and walk at the rate of four miles an hour without any exertion.

Two miles and a half beyond Cardiff, I quitted Glamorganshire and Wales for Monmouthshire and England, by crossing the river Romney. I quitted the county of Glamorgan with the conviction that, as far I knew it, it was the finest county I had ever seen; and I soon found that of Monmouth was not likely to rival it in my opinion. The country was still rich, and commanded magnificent views of the Bristol Channel; but the villages had lost their neatness and fascination, and the road was not so good.

At Basaleg, in a fertile valley adorned with fine wood, stands Tredegar, the

mansion of Sir Charles Morgan; a noble house, and, for a low situation, in a pleasing one. It is my opinion, that most of the country-houses in England and Wales will soon be habitable only by rooks and daws, so much it is the fashion to close them up with wood. An oak or an elm is a fine object, and something may be said even in favour of a poplar; but because that is the case, shall I exclude day-light, prevent the free circulation of the air I breathe, and renounce all the other fine objects that the Creator of the universe has placed around me, to look only at oaks, elms, and poplars? I lose my patience to see the Vale of the Ebwith, enclosed between two ranges of lofty hills, running up for miles in the front of Sir Charles Morgan's house, in all the wild grandeur of Welsh majesty; and intercepted by trees of his

own planting; or at least by trees which he might cut down!

At Basaleg, we crossed the Ebwith, which joins with the Usk to form Newport haven; and soon after, we arrived at Newport itself. It is a thriving place, containing many good new houses. The old ones chiefly arranged themselves around the church, which stands on the summit of an unmerciful hill; the new extend along the bottom, and the road has followed them. Vessels come up to the town; but the sea is three miles below. Newport, like its neighbours, has the remains of an ancient castle.

Hills and vales, rivers and sea, cottages and castles, are excellent antidotes for grief. Margaret has resumed her pencil, and the roses are stealing into her cheeks.

LETTER XLI.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Worcester.

By turning to the left at Newport, we should have pursued the route I first intended; but I had now determined to see "the Severn on one hand, and the Forest of Dean on the other." For this purpose I took a road which I had seen from the town, marching straight and sturdily up a very steep hill, disdaining any turning or winding which might have mitigated its ascent. I own, if this hill had a bottom, I should like to have gone round

it. The top, however, presented fine views of the Channel on the right, and a fine and spacious vale, I believe that of the Usk, on our left. The town of Caerleon was seated very near us in the vale.

Five miles of successive hills brought us into a rich, well-wooded, narrow vale, which had the goodness to conduct us to the village of Caerwent, seven miles further. Two other hills, with a narrow bottom running between, occupied the remaining four miles to Chepstow; hill and dale equally, and surprisingly, fertile. At the top of the last hill a new scene opened; the town of Chepstow running for half a mile before us down its steep side; beyond it, on the left, a confused assemblage of hills, rocks, and woods; and on the right, the magnificent silver Severn, gliding through rich meadows,

and uniting with the Wye. The vale of the Wye at Chepstow is reduced to the breadth of the river, and bounded by walls of perpendicular rock, besprinkled by wood.

Chepstow castle stands upon a high rock rising from the river's brink. The gateway, with a noble massive round tower on each side, is tolerably perfect. Through this we enter the outer court, which is still enclosed by its ancient walls. On the right are considerable remains of arched passages, and other buildings, with a chimney remarkably beautiful: on the left is the keep, stately, and entire to its whole height. Three beams remain of the ground floor. Below this is the dungeon, which is circular, like a well: above the ground floor, is the principal story, of which all the beams of the floor remain, but none of the planks. In the

year 1710, a female relation of the guide's was born in this room; the stairs which lead to it are still perfect. But time is continually stealing something from Chepstow castle; and I now saw two large stones lying on the ground that were not there the day before.

Opposite to the grand entrance of the outer court, we passed into the inner, which is now a kitchen garden. At the further end of this is the chapel, with a fine double window in the chancel, and three smaller ones in the other part. Other apartments of the castle joined this on the north. The guide affirms that the whole occupied three acres of ground. A part of the building on the right of the grand entrance is her dwelling, and the tower on the right of that entrance she lets. What a habitation is the tower of a ruined

castle for a maniac? and such is the unfortunate creature who resides in it!

I heard a shrill and melancholy female voice cry out, twenty times, "Give me my white petticoat, and my silk handkerchief!" and, turning, I saw a slender figure, dressed with little care, a face the hue of death, and every feature expressive of anxiety, and heard the demand repeated, "Give me my white petticoat and my silk handkerchief!" I stopped, and said to the guide, "What is the meaning of this?"

"The woman is mad, and her husband has taken her clothes from her."

"Ah!" said I, "that husband is the cause of her misfortune!"

After some evasions, the keeper of the castle owned that I was right, and added, that the husband was living with another woman, to whom he had given

the apparel of his wife. Undoubtedly he paid rent for the tower, and therefore the sufferings of its inhabitant made no part of the business of the old woman; but I do think a law which allowed a husband to suspend his wife from one of the beams would be much more merciful.

Now I am upon the subject of wedlock, I will give you a portrait of it which was presented to me a few days ago.

A gentleman of large fortune, who has a house upon a hill that overlooks one of the towns of South Wales, was married to an amiable woman, by whom he had several children. By degrees, he grew weary of her, and fancied that one less amiable would suit him better; he therefore brought a common prostitute from the town below, and gave her the command of his family. The

lady pined and died; the gentleman married the woman who already occupied her place; but, being now his wife, he discovered that the second lady was no longer agreeable to him, and he went down into the streets for a third. The present wife, however, was cast in a different mould from the former; she violently resisted the introduction of her successor; and the gentleman, finding himself unable to establish her in his house, above, has condescended to reside with her, occasionally, in the town, below. The rival queens have met in the streets, and fought.

This story was related to me as a fact; but you are at liberty to say, with Greensleeves, when he heard the story of the lady he had murdered, "It is not so, and it was not so, and God forbid it should be so."

We quitted the county of Monmouth, and entered that of Gloucester, by crossing the Wye at Chepstow, on a crazy bridge of narrow planks, which sounded under my horses feet like a drum. A wooden bridge over a deep and sullen river, which, at spring tides, will carry down a vessel of 800 tons! I had expressed some doubts of the safety of this passage to our waiter at the Beaufort Arms; but he endeavoured to remove them, by assuring me that the counties of Monmouth and Gloucester were going to build one of stone.

On ascending the opposite hill, I found that we had approached Chepstow on the wrong side. Here we met it face to face; and the castle, with its thick robe of ivy, at the bottom, and house above house, to the summit of the hill, presented a most singular spectacle.

I had now the Severn on one hand, and the forest of Dean on the other; the one a noble river, the other an open ridge of hill intermixed with wood; but the price I paid for these objects was ascending and descending a number of very steep hills. The proverb enjoins us to give even Satan his due, and I will do the hill above Blakeney the justice to say, that it was worse than any of its brethren.

From Newnham to Gloucester, we drove along the vale of the Severn, through villages and shady orchards hung with apples. And so fatigued was I with dragging up hills and walking down them; so satisfied with extensive views; that if I had composed the ingenious allegory before mentioned, I should have represented my pilgrim as renouncing high stations

and arduous undertakings, and moving quietly along the vale of life.

The streets of Gloucester are clean and spacious; the buildings are ancient; but the pride of the city is its cathedral. The guide owned it was inferior to that of York; a truth which no man can deny. The honour of having the second in England, he said, was a matter of dispute between Gloucester and Canterbury. It is so long since I saw the cathedral of Canterbury, that I will not presume to decide upon the point of precedence; I shall only observe, that if it be doubtful at Gloucester, it may be indisputable at Canterbury.

The cathedral of Gloucester is four hundred and forty-four feet in length. It contains a curious whispering gallery, and a fine painted window seventy feet high. The cathedral was first

founded in 681, by Osric, king of Northumberland; though upon what business he travelled so far as Gloucester, I do not now recollect. A part of Osric's church is still remaining, and forms a part of the present elegant structure. He was buried in the church he had erected; and his figure, holding a small model of the church in its hand, was laid upon his tomb. When the new church was built, the bones of Osric were removed to another tomb, where they now lie, and we were shewn on the tomb a new figure, copied from the original. But you know that I am fond of originals; I therefore inquired after the old Osric, and had the pleasure of being introduced to him. The figure is perfect, except the features of the face; and the little church, except the steeple. It stands neglected, against

one of the walls of the cathedral. I never did wish to be a bishop; but if I were one, and happened to be bishop of Gloucester, I would reinstate the rightful Osric in his former honours, and pull down the usurper.

The cathedral of Gloucester contains the remains of Edward the Second. His figure lies upon the tomb, and over it are beautiful arches and pinnacles. Here is also the monument of that mighty baron, Humphrey de Bohun, and his wife.

The cloisters are entire, and are said to be the finest in England. The library is not so remarkable for what it is, as for what it has been; it was formerly the refectory of the monks; several of our kings have assembled their parliaments in it, and one received his crown.

Tewkesbury is a handsome town.

Like Gloucester, it has ancient houses and wide streets; and, like that, an abbey church, though it is not a cathedral. The points of our history with which this edifice is connected are so remarkable, that I could not omit the examination of it. Here lies the unfortunate Edward of Lancaster, prince of Wales, who was stabbed in cold blood by his relations of York, after the battle fought near this place was over; and here lies that Clarence who drew his sword, and helped to dispatch him. Here lie Wenlock, whose skull the duke of Somerset cleft with a battle-axe, for not supporting him; and the same duke of Somerset, who was beheaded after he had been taken prisoner.

The remains of the prince lie before the chancel, and are covered with a marble slab. The tomb of the duke

of Clarence and his wife, who was the daughter of the great earl of Warwick, has their figures in the dress they wore. His is armour; hers a kerchief, hanging over head and shoulders, with about six rows of thick quilling towards the face, long sleeves reaching to the bottom of the dress, and a sort of bib on the breast. The habit levels all distinction of shoulders, waist, and hips; and leaves it undiscoverable where one ends, and another begins. Notwithstanding the lamentations of our grandmothers on the enormities of modern fashions, I am convinced that the dress of ladies is much improved since the days of the duchess of Clarence....

On each side of the chancel is a beautiful chapel, which, like the tomb of the Clarences, is admirably ornamented. They are decorated with a

number of small statues; but, small as they are, they were not beneath the vengeance of the followers of Oliver Cromwell, who decapitated the poor little saints and angels with the most unrelenting barbarity.

The prince of Wales was murdered in a house which is No. 107, in the High Street. It was then the quarters of the three brothers, Edward, Clarence, and Richard; but it is said to have been rebuilt.

Malvern Hills, rising abruptly from a cultivated plain, now commanded my fixed attention; and the white houses scattered on their side promised an opportunity for a nearer examination; we therefore crossed the Severn at Upton, and drove to the largest of these, which is called the Well House: a house hanging on the side of a precipitous hill, with Gloucester, Chel-

tenham, Tewkesbury, Upton, Pershore, Worcester, and all the intervening country stretched before it.

In the early stages of the existence of watering-places, the company assembled in large houses built purposely for their accommodation, and each formed one family. In process of time, persons of the highest rank withdrew from the general society, and occupied private lodgings. This was enough. As cloth of gold would not mix with cloth of silk, cloth of silk would not touch cloth of frize; and every succeeding gradation, down to the lowest, shut itself up in private lodgings. Little people determined to live alone, and eat alone, because it was the fashion for great people to be in private lodgings.

The Well House of Malvern is one of the few that maintain their original

station. Here, men of rank and talent, country gentlemen and clergymen, officers in the army and navy, and servants of the state, with their respective families and connexions, are content to associate with each other. The table is well served; the house is well regulated; and order and comfort prevail throughout the whole.

The parade of Malvern Wells is the hill, which is cut in traverses that form an easy ascent to the top. The entrance to this parade is through a door on the second floor of the Well House. The first ascent leads to a level terrace of gravel, bordered with the mountain ash. From this, three separate verdant paths open on an upper terrace of the finest turf; and from either end of this terrace, different paths ascend to the summit. Seats, covered and uncovered, are every

where found; donkies are ascending and descending continually in fine weather; and some gentlemen ride upon horseback; but this last is not a very common undertaking. The purity of the air, and the beauty and extent of the views, surpass every thing, I believe, in the world, that is so easily attainable.

The grounds belonging to the mansion of Little Malvern are indescribably beautiful. A gentleman of great taste and learning, who is much at the Well House, characterizes them as what would have constituted the earthly felicity of Cowper. They are, indeed, paradise on a small scale.

At Worcester I gazed at the handsome streets, the fine shops, and the elegant women, till the china arrested my attention. I entered the shop of Chamberlain and Son, and candidly told its mistress that my purpose was

to admire, not to buy. She begged that might make no difference in my examination of the china. She took down one piece, then another; coffee cups intended for the Grand Signior, and to be used with saucers of gold; a dozen caudle cups of forty-eight guineas price; tumblers of two guineas each; in a word, the finest drawings, both in colours and Indian ink, of flowers, fruits, birds, landscapes, and human figures. She informed me that it was impossible to make their articles too costly, and that the most exquisite found the readiest sale. I might have resisted the temptation of the wonders around me; but such civility was too much for my resolution, and I took a piece of china of two guineas price.

The outside of the cathedral at Worcester is far less striking than that

at Gloucester, and its length is 54 feet less. The roof of the middle aisle, and the pillars that support it, are extremely grand; the pulpit and the stalls of the choir are richly ornamented with carving. It was founded by St. Woolstan, whose tomb I saw.

Without the choir, is the tomb of King John, with his statue lying on the top. My conductor was present when it was opened; and he assured me that the dress of the figure, which is a full robe, girded round the waist, with a small collar, not very close, and wristbands at the hands, was an exact representation of the dress within. The stuff that the real robe was made of could not be ascertained, owing to the gums with which it had been prepared. He said that no doubt could be entertained of the resemblance of the features; though those

of the monarch were shrunk, and the nose of the figure was flattened, by time. There is a crown on the head of the statue, but not on the head of the king.

I was next shewn the tomb of Prince Arthur, son of Henry the seventh, in a chapel finely carved, like those at Tewkesbury, and ornamented with small statues of angels and holy men, mutilated by fanatical fury. Of the modern pieces of sculpture, the figure of Bishop Hough in sickness, supported by religion, by Roubilliac, is most beautiful.

The library is a circular room, sixty feet in diameter, supported by a pillar in the centre, which spreads its branches like rays along the ceiling, and touches the extremity of the roof. Here I saw a Latin bible with illuminated capitals, printed in the year 1478, lately bound,

and most unmercifully cut in the margin.

The guide, finding I had a fancy for ancient books, shewed me another, a Latin folio, with the title-page lost. It was ornamented with a prodigious number of wooden cuts, some representing monsters, as embellishments to the letter-press; and others, assemblages of men and women in habits of the time. The guide said that the book was printed in 1458; if my memory be correct, there is no printed book extant of so early a date. It is probably the Chronicon Chronicorum of Hartman Schedel, printed at Nuremberg in 1493.

There is no part of Great Britain that I am acquainted with, which can present to view, in so small a space, three such towns, and three such churches (if the two cities and cathe-

drals will pardon the indignity offered them by general terms), as Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Worcester. The inns I found in this tour merit notice. Those at Brecon, Pyle, Cardiff, Newport and Chepstow, look like noblemen's houses; and the King's Head at Gloucester, and the Hop-pole at Worcester, though more like inns in appearance, exceed them in accommodations.

Innkeeper's bills cut deep into one's purse; but if we enjoy the same luxuries in travelling that we do at home, or at least, a good imitation of them; if, in addition to the solid comforts of good eating, good wine, and good beds, we have the supernumeraries of plate and fine linen, sofas, festoons and fringes, they must be charged in the bill.

To-morrow I turn my face towards

home, and I am already anticipating the pleasure of meeting you. I wrote to Charles Oakwood from Swansea, mentioning the probable time of my return; and I have received a letter from him at this place, dated from Belmont House. The intelligence gave Margaret neither pain nor pleasure.

LETTER XLII.

TO MISS CARADINE.

Belmont House.

AFTER my long silence, you will hear, with pleasure, my dear Maria, that my journey, and the time I have been here, have made a greater alteration in my health and spirits than I could have supposed possible. At home, I saw Millichamp wherever I turned my eyes; and heard him when all was still. On my way hither, new objects forced themselves upon me, and turned my thoughts into different channels; and now I seem to have become an inhabitant of another world, and am much occupied by the

new *country* and new people that surround me. When I revert to past events, I shudder; I think, for a moment, with Lear, "That way madness lies." If this happen in the day, I instantly change my place, or my employment; if in the night, my refuge is to trace the scenes of my journey.

Mrs. Oakwood is kindness in a human form. She has made no remonstrances; no attempts to divert or console me. She gives no advice; she lays me under no restraint. Her house is charmingly situated, and very convenient, though much smaller than Oakwood Hall. She took me into two of the pleasantest rooms, a bedchamber and dressing-room, on our arrival. "Here, Margaret," said she, "is your castle. Nobody enters here without your invitation. Here," continued she, opening a desk, "are all

the materials for drawing; and that door opens into a room, in which you will find a small collection of books, and a few good prints, that I beg you will make use of as you please. Your whole time is your own. You are not to suppose that you ought to sit with me, because I am alone; or stay to assist me in entertaining my company. My book, my pen, and my needle, are always sufficient company for me; and the few friends I admit require no effort of mine to amuse them. When you are weary of your employments, walk, or come into the breakfast or drawing-room, for as long or as short a time as you choose; and quit it without making any apology. If I am reading or writing, I shall not notice you; if I am at my needlework, we may work a duet; if my friends are about me, you

may *join* the conversation, or be silent; *play* at cards, or not, as you please."

You may believe I was grateful for an independence so congenial to my *feelings*.

Mrs. Oakwood breakfasts in her own apartment, or below, as she finds herself disposed. At eleven o'clock she takes an airing in an open carriage. She cannot walk far; and as she deems exercise indispensable, she braves all weathers. She says she is both barometer and thermometer to her neighbours. "It will rain," they say; "Mrs. Oakwood has two great coats." Or, "It is very cold; Mrs. Oakwood has a great coat, muff, and tippet." Or, "It is a mild day; Mrs. Oakwood has only a sarsnet pelisse." She works in her garden for an hour before she dresses, if the weather will allow; and she is not very nice in her choice of weather for gardening, any more than driving,

We dine alone; and quit the room as soon as the cloth is taken away. We spend the afternoon in different occupations; and there is always a small party to tea and cards; unless Mrs. Oakwood visits a neighbour. She does not go far for society; nor will she associate with any persons merely because they live near; but she is so fortunate as to have three or four families at a short distance from her house, who are worthy of being her companions; and that is saying a great deal in their favour. Her company leave soon after nine; we sup, as we dined, alone; and retire at eleven.

The first week of my being here, I availed myself of my privilege, almost to its fullest extent; making my appearance only at dinner and supper: the second, whenever I was inclined to work, I sat with Mrs. Oakwood, if

there were no strangers; but I now continue in the drawing-room the whole evening, and frequently enjoy the society which assembles there.

Our nearest neighbour, and Mrs. Oakwood's most intimate friend, is a Mrs. Brudenell, whom you love as soon as see. She is tall, elegant, both in person and manner, and her eyes are most expressive. Her face has been handsome; but looks now clouded with sickness, rather than age. She unites the highest degrees of dignity, grace, and sweetness. You would imagine this interesting woman was something more than thirty. Great was my astonishment when she told me that she was forty-seven; that she had been married twenty-four years and had sons and daughters established in the world.

Mr. Brudenell is near sixty; tall,

and still well-looking; but totally blind, and so lame as to be carried in a chair, by two men, if he have to change his place but a yard. At the age of nineteen, a person snapped a tobacco-pipe at him, across the table. One of the pieces went into his eye, and took away the sight; the anguish of that eye deprived him of the other; and gout and rheumatism have deprived him of his legs; yet he is still a keen fox-hunter; though a heavy man. A groom always rides before, carrying a bunch of keys at his girdle, and the master's horse is accustomed to follow. When they come to a leap, the man cries out "Hedge! Gate! Stone wall!" The master seats himself properly in his saddle, and goes over every thing. I have twice ridden out with him, though not a hunting; and he sat as well, and talked with as much

unconcern, as any of the party, the bunch of keys only going before.

Mr. Brudenell admires Mrs. Oakwood, who told him, yesterday, he would not like her so well, if he could see. "Then," replied he, gallantly, "let me not see; the music of your voice is enough." Do not laugh at me, my dear Maria, for making a woman of forty-seven interesting, and a man approaching sixty gallant. If you were to see Mr. and Mrs. Brudenell, you would find that I had not exaggerated.

Mrs. Brudenell has a lady with her, on a visit, whom I pity, though I do not esteem. She has been, as Mrs. Brudenell tells me, a beauty, a poet, a woman of uncommon sense and refinement, and the admiration of all mankind. She is five-and-forty. The sense, the refinement, and the power

of making pretty verses, remain; but, alas! the beauty is fled, and a care-worn face, almost shocking, has taken place of it. The men who remember her when she was beautiful, now know her no more; and their successors think her not worth their notice. Still she haunts company and public places, the ghost of what she was; and the neglect she experiences embitters all her pleasure, and adds to her ill looks. She has been known, when sitting down with a gay party, to compare herself to a death's head, at the top of the table. Having heard Mrs. Brudenell speak of the good sense and superior manners of Mrs. Oakwood, this lady pays her court to her with the most flattering assiduity, which Mrs. Oakwood returns only with cold civility. I asked her the reason. "I cannot like her," replied she. "Her

language is elevated, but studied; her manners are reckoned insinuating; but as they are not natural, to me they are repulsive. I do not attribute her attention to any merit of my own, or any she might fancy in me; but she seizes me, because she wishes to extend the number of her admirers. She made a tour in Wales, of which she published an account that does her credit; but she drew Mrs. Brudenell in to be her companion on the journey, and considered only herself during the whole course of it."

Surely, my dear Maria, when I am five-and-forty, I shall not be like this lady! What a lesson does she afford! If our happiness, in youth, spring from admiration, certain misery succeeds it; for nobody can admire old age. Give me, then, esteem, rather than admiration: I can never be too old to deserve it.

We found Charles Oakwood here on our arrival, and never did I see man so changed. Instead of the confidence with which he used to address me on the subject of love, he has all the solicitude of a lover, but he is silent. What can I do with him? It were easy to repress presumption; but his present behaviour distresses me.

LETTER XLIII.

TO MISS CARADINE.

Belmont House.

I rejoice with you, my dear Maria, that Mr. Marriot is returning to England, and that his return will unite you to the man you have so long and so truly loved. Happy Maria! your lover is like other men; and no mistaken word will part you for ever. But so far as Millichamp was different from others, so far was he superior. I often say to myself, "Where is he? what is he doing?" I cannot fancy him dead; though I believe he would take

no care of his life; but thousands are in danger for one that perishes. Drunken men go safe; men asleep have gone safe; so, I trust, has he. His horse is steady, and accustomed to do right without his master's direction. I think Millichamp would go where chance directed, and stop when necessity obliged him; perhaps enter some family, as he did ours, a stranger; he would find friends every where; perhaps love some other daughter. That would require time; but time is all-powerful, and regrets are unavailing. I lost my health in the shock; and but for the kindness of Mrs. Oakwood in transplanting me, might have drooped and died under it; for I believe I was in some danger: but, when my strength was restored, my mind was no longer engrossed by the fatal event which had weakened me. I sleep; I

exclaim with Sancho, "Ten thousand blessings on the man who first invented sleep!" It is not only a cure for every present evil; but it enables us to bear those which are to come.

To return to Millichamp. It is plain that the step he took in haste he approves on reflection; or he would either have returned, or have made some inquiry concerning me. His return would instantly have convinced him of the falsehood of his suspicions: inquiry, indeed, might have confirmed them; for Charles left Oakwood when I did, though he took a different road.

That Millichamp loved me fervently I cannot doubt. His very manner of leaving me would prove it, if proof were wanting; he could not bear to see me, after he believed me perfidious. But, my dear Maria, Millichamp might love more than other men; but

I do not believe men love as we do. Their souls are of a harder, a more stubborn texture. Love is not the business of their lives, as it is of ours. One permits us to share his heart with his books; another with his horses and dogs; another with his profession, or trade: our lovers know no rival. This, then, is my conclusion. If I, who loved Millichamp, have now recovered health and spirits, when deprived of him; he is, by this time, still more reconciled to his loss. Added to this, he had a source of consolation which I had not; he believes me deserving only of his contempt; while I think him, as I ever thought, the best and most amiable of men.

I shew you an indubitable symptom of amendment, now I reason. At first, though I attempted to reason, I could only feel; and, afterwards, I dreaded to recollect my feelings.

I shall now bring you acquainted with one or two more of Mrs. Oakwood's neighbours.

Mr. Carleton, our rector, is the best preacher I ever heard. He preaches extempore, which I should dislike in any other; but he is as correct and methodical, as if his whole sermon were written; and it is then a great advantage to hear it spoken. He even speaks his quotations from the bible; for though it lies before him, it is almost always shut. I was once expressing my admiration of him to Mrs. Oakwood. "I wish, my dear," said she, "I could sketch the man; but I am afraid my words will fall short of my ideas. He is what I should call a *great* man. If he had been a sailor, he would have been a Cook; if an actor, a Garrick; if a lawyer, an Erskine; if a statesman, a Fox; if a general, or a legislator, a

Washington or Bonaparte. He has an eye so penetrating, that nothing but the all-seeing eye of heaven can go beyond it. His reading is universal, his memory retentive; his feelings warm, his judgment strong, his reasoning acute, his language copious, his action natural. In a word, I think him equal to the founding a new religion, or a new government, if his inclination led him to do so. And what mischief might he not do, if his inclination led him to it! But it does not. He is a domestic man; fond of his wife, doating on his children, and good, I believe, to every living creature."

Mrs. Carleton, as well as her husband, is handsome. She is mild and gentle in her manners, and is worthy the tenderness of such a man. Miss Carleton, the eldest daughter, is a fine

tall girl of eighteen, scarcely formed; but inheriting a portion of her father's talents, and her mother's sweetness. I wish this family may like Mrs. Oakwood's humble guest as I like them.

Miss Brudenell, who is a very agreeable young woman, is returned from a visit to her aunt; and Mr. Henry Brudenell, who is in the East India Company's service, is on a visit to his father and mother. They are my principal associates. Mr. Henry Brudenell is a youthful copy of his father's person; with the addition of two of the finest black eyes that ever adorned the countenance of man. Though now only three and twenty, he has fought in India, and has been at the taking of a great city. The account he gives of it is horrid. Though the victory of the English troops was decisive, a little more time might have

made it doubtful, if not have turned the scale. He says their forage was so reduced, that the bullocks that carried the baggage dropped down dead, with hunger. He himself had a favourite horse, which remained three days without food; and every time his master approached him, he neighed so piteously, that at last, unable to bear it, he drew out a pistol and shot him. If the town had held out a few days longer, famine and pestilence would have seized the British camp. The tale of slaughter I could not hear. The spoil appears to have been divided with little exactness. Mr. Henry Brudenell received, for his share, an emerald and a promise. The emerald he sold for three hundred pounds; the promise is, as yet, worth nothing.

The various scenes Mr. Henry Brudenell has passed through, have

furnished him with a number of anecdotes, that render him a pleasant companion. I listen with great attention to his expeditions and engagements, having never been in the company of a soldier before. His account of the manners of sailors, and the way of living on board a ship, is also interesting to me, because it is new. Though I have a good idea of a voyage from the many I have read, there are little incidents which bring it home to one, when a man relates what he has seen.

Among other features in the character of sailors, Mr. Henry Brudenell says, they take a pride in riding on horseback when they come on shore; and at Plymouth it is very common for a sailor to hire a horse for two shillings, ride him up and down some road for half an hour, and then return him to his stable. An honest tar

was so riding, when his horse, perceiving himself without a master, got upon the narrow raised path designed for foot-passengers, to the great annoyance of all he met. Jack would have remedied the evil; but knew not how. He asked counsel of several persons whom he met; but they happened to be country people, and did not understand his sea dialect. At length he saw two captains in the navy, advancing arm in arm. He was terribly afraid of running foul of them, and bawled out, "D—n my eyes, which way must I pull the helm to keep clear of you?"

One of the captains cried, "Hard a starboard!"

The seaman immediately pulled the starboard rein; and so effectually, that he not only brought the horse off the causeway, but himself off the

horse. He got up, and was proceeding again to take charge of the helm; when the officer said, "You won't mount again, will you? you had better lead the horse back."

"No, please your honour," replied the sailor, "I ar'nt such a fool as that comes to, neither. I haven't rode my time out; and I will have a penn'orth for my penny."

We have passed our Christmas, the season of ancient revelry, with gaiety. Mrs. Oakwood began by inviting all the young people in the neighbourhood to a ball; and every family has followed her example. I have been much solicited to dance, but I have declined it; being not only afraid of dancing among those who had had such superior advantages, as you know I have only received a few lessons in that art from your dancing-master,

when I happened to be at Oatley; but I found that my spirits were not equal to the exertion.

In a morning Mr. Charles and I walk or ride with the Brudenells; unless the weather confines us to the house; when we work and read with Mrs. Oakwood. In our rides, we have the company of Mr. Brudenell; in our walks, that of his daughter; and in both, that of his son. Mr. Charles Oakwood and Mr. Henry Brudenell do not like each other; and I am afraid I am the cause.

LETTER XLIV.

TO MISS CARADINE.

Belmont House.

You will think it extraordinary, my dear Maria, if you do not already know it, that though I am such an admirer of poetry, I had never read Burns. I knew that there had been such a ploughman, and that he had been much admired; but I conceived he was admired merely as a ploughman who could make verses; as threshers, journeymen shoemakers, and milk-women had been before. As I do not reverence rhymes because they are fabricated by persons generally thought unequal to the task, I set my face

against Burns, and never read even his scattered pieces which I had met with in other books. Judge, then, if you have read his works, and read them if you have not, what I must have felt when I heard Mrs. Oakwood sing, in a sweet, clear, articulate voice, accompanied only by her guitar, the plaintive notes and enchanting words of "When wild war's deadly blast was blawn," "Highland Mary," "Wilt thou be my dearie," and "Oh, open the door to me, oh!"—when, to more sprightly music, I heard those exquisitely humourous pieces, "O, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad," "Last May a braw wooer came down the lang glen," and "Husband, husband, cease your strife;"—when I heard the sublime and unique address of Bruce to his countrymen! I seized upon the works of Burns as a newly discovered

gold mine; and, like his own Mrs. Dunlop, never was so completely carried away in my life.

When I had finished the poetry of Burns, I ran to Mrs. Oakwood. "Engaged, or not engaged," cried I, "I must speak. Burns is the most bewitching poet Great Britain has produced. I can never read him again, for the impression he has made on my mind is indelible, and a second reading would only tell me what I can never forget. I have read a whole volume of poetry in which Venus and Cupid are never mentioned; in which the author invokes no muse that was not born in his own country."

"Burns shews his judgment, not his ignorance, in that particular," said Mrs. Oakwood; "for among the few books which chance threw in his way, in his younger days, was the Pantheon.

But he disdained such worn-out mythology; he described what he felt and what he saw, and illuminated all by the magic touch of genius. Burns," continued Mrs. Oakwood, "has written no great work; so, according to Dutch notions, and, perhaps, to some English, he cannot be a great poet; but his trifles are equally wonderful in the humourous, the pathetic, and the sublime; and his prose is not less astonishing than his verse. Truth and Nature form his grand basis; his poems and his letters are the offspring of his heart; and they find their way to the heart of the reader, if he have one. When the talents of Burns had ushered him into the world, his poetry was sometimes due, and sometimes bespoken; it is then inferior."

"How I lament," exclaimed I,

"that such a man should die so young!"

"Burns," replied Mrs. Oakwood, "was, as he says himself, 'a man of many sins;' but his very errors interest me in his favour; for they originated in the ardent imagination which made him a poet, and in the temptations which his poetry procured for him. His passions, sensations, and perceptions were so keen, that no frail human clay could hold out under their influence. Intemperance certainly helped to dissolve the fabric; but if Burns had had the resolution to be temperate, the fire within would have consumed him before he could have reached old age."

Mrs. Oakwood was silent some moments, as if her thoughts had wandered to some other subject; she then said, "When I was very young, a

small tract which was called the Assembly's Catechism, from its being the composition of an assembly of divines, fell into my hands. It was intended for the instruction of the children of Dissenters; but it must have required the united wisdom of the whole conclave to have framed a proper answer to its first question, 'What is the chief end of man?' and ingenious was the boy, who, not having heard, or having forgotten it, replied, 'His head.'

"Were I called upon to declare what was the chief end of man, I should say, 'To drink.' From the British isles, to the extremes of South and North America; and round by the immense empire of Russia, to Germany, Holland, and Britain again; to swallow liquor is the business, or, at least, the enjoyment of life. While

one nation converses by the inspiration of its wines and brandy; another is set a going by rum, chica, bouza, geneva, usquebaugh, whisky, or strong beer.

"Modern philosophers have found fault with the present state of society; and I have thought that by mending one bad place they might make another, and it were best to let things alone; but to drink when one is not thirsty is such a perversion of nature, that it cries aloud for reform. Its own folly should make one shun it, if its consequences were indifferent: but what are they? Intoxication! madness! ruin, both of body and mind!"

"Surely," said I, "mankind cannot naturally have a greater inclination to drink without thirst than to eat without appetite! It must be the necessity of conforming to custom, or

it must be habit, that incites them to it."

"It is both," resumed Mrs. Oakwood. "The glass of wine, or the cup of beer, is put into the infant's little hand, before he is capable of holding it; and when the young man finds himself seated at table with other men, he must follow the example of the worst, or be made ashamed. He drinks, and, in due time, teaches his children to drink.

"The Spectator says, no man can plead, in palliation of the sin of profane swearing, that he is of a *swearing constitution*: I aver that no man is of a *drinking constitution*. We have a natural taste for milk and for water; our taste for every other kind of beverage is acquired."

I have now, my dear Maria, read the whole of Burns's works. No man can

ever discriminate them more justly than he has done himself. Of one song, he says to Thomson, "I wish you may like this; I think it in my best manner:" of another, "Bravo! I say this is a good song;" of a third, "This is neither good nor bad; but it is impossible to be always original, entertaining, and witty."

Well might Mrs. Oakwood say that Burns was the poet of truth and of nature; there needs only his manner of composing his songs to prove it. First, he must like an air, or he cannot make words to it; then he must learn the air. He next considers what kind of general expression it has, and what subject will suit it. He then walks out into the fields, and seizes what rural imagery he can find, corresponding with the idea he has formed; and, lastly, he goes home to

finish and correct. Such a man, and such a method, could not produce any thing unnatural or incongruous. And what a pity that such a man should have been the victim of licentiousness! I exclaim, as I often do, alas! poor human nature! I have watched the dates of his letters, and calculated how long he had to live!

The man whose works have charmed me, and are formed to delight all mankind, says, three months before his death, "Since I wrote to you last, I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness; and have counted time by the repercussions of pain. Rheumatism, cold, and fever, have formed a terrible combination against me. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope."

One would think this sufficient an-

guish for the strength of mortal man; yet this seems to have been forgotten in what followed; for nine days before his death Burns writes, with an unsteady hand, to his friend and employer Thomson, "After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel devil of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song genius you have seen."

It was time the curtain dropped. Another word, and I have done with Burns. There are more lines in his works worth quoting than in any book I ever read, except the Bible and the plays of Shakespeare.

After great things, will you listen to small? You will; for to you nothing is small that concerns your Margaret.

In our walks, Charles Oakwood and Henry Brudenell have frequently offered me an arm, which I have invariably refused. Yesterday, in going up a very steep hill, Henry took my arm, and drew it within his. Before I could take it away, Charles had quitted Mary Brudenell, with whom he was walking, and had joined me on the other side. "Margaret," said he, "do you confer a favour on a new acquaintance which you have always refused to an old friend?"

"I think," said I, withdrawing my arm, "that dragging me up this hill is a trouble, rather than a favour; and I did not voluntarily trouble Mr. Brudenell."

"I believe, Sir," said Henry to Charles, "that a long acquaintance with Miss Freeman is not necessary either to make one aspire to the title of her friend, or to offer her assistance."

"I thank you, sir," said I; "but I want no assistance, and I will take no arm."

Each of the gentlemen maintained his post, in sullen silence, to the end of the walk, and I addressed only Miss Brudenell.

At dinner, Charles Oakwood sent away his plate untouched; and when I entered the drawing-room afterwards, I found him there alone. Placing a

chair for me near his own, but forgetting to sit down himself, he said, with much agitation, "Margaret, I am not the coxcomb you have seen me. I once believed that my person and fortune might command your affections; but, as I have known you better, I have thought more highly of you, and more justly of myself. I have now long loved in silence; a silence which every look and action of mine must have convinced you proceeded not from indifference, but respect; and I would not have spoken now, had I not been certain that Henry Brudenell loves you. Millichamp's attachment was prior to mine; and, knowing you as I have done for some time past, I would have withdrawn my pretensions, whatever it had cost me, if he had appeared again. In that case, I would have followed

his example, and have troubled you no more. But to be supplanted by a stranger! an acquaintance of yesterday! How shall I bear it! My dear Margaret," continued Charles Oakwood, "I do not ask your favour; I would only try to deserve it: but answer me one question candidly, and I am satisfied—Do you prefer Brudenell to me?"

"Do not renew so painful a subject," said I; "on any other I shall hear you with pleasure."

"I would not even have hinted at it," replied Charles Oakwood, "but that I know Brudenell is my rival, and I cannot exist here under the possibility of his being preferred to me. Answer my question with that frankness I have always experienced from you; and, if it be in the affirmative, I will leave Belmont in an hour."

"I have nothing to offer to Mr. Henry Brudenell," said I, "but common civility, in return for common esteem; if he feel more than that for me, I am truly sorry. To you I offer the respect due to your family, as the chief of the village in which I was born, and have passed my days; and that due to yourself, as the nephew of my dear and kind friend Mrs. Oakwood. If this do not satisfy you; if I must speak upon a subject which I wish might be forgotten for ever; I must say that I am grateful for your attentions, and that there is no man now whom I prefer to yourself; but ——"

"Hold! Margaret," interrupted Charles Oakwood, "I hear no more. I cannot bear to have this delicious sentence explained away. I will think

on it all day, and sleep on it at night, if joy do not keep me waking."

"O, hear me out," said I, "though no Millichamp be at the door! This is the same precipitation that caused the former fatal mistake! You must hear me, while I add that my regard is not of the sort which I have felt, and which I ought to feel for the man whom I should solemnly vow to love, honour, and obey."

"Then," said Charles Oakwood, sighing, "I recur to my former profession. I ask not the regard you speak of, unless sincere, silent, unobtrusive love may in time inspire you with a portion of it."

"How unavailing such a hope!" said I. "If you will indulge it, you must understand that I believe it impossible it should be realized."

"I will understand it so; only do

not banish me from your sight," said Charles.

"I would not do so, if I had the power, which in this house I have not; I would not deprive myself of the society of one of the few friends whom Providence has given me.—But, do you fully understand me?"

"Ah! Margaret, I understand you too well. While you flatter me by your friendship, you would take from me every shadow of further hope."

"I would; and for both our sakes, I would have you be persuaded of it." I then left the room, and returned to it with Mrs. Oakwood.

Could I have been more explicit? Yet Charles Oakwood looks satisfied, and I feel as if I were not. I am sensible of the difference between the vain confident man, who imagined that he had only to stoop and take me up when-

ever he should determine to do so; and the modest respectful lover, who watches me in silence, and prevents my wishes; but I do not feel for him what I have felt for Millichamp, and what I believe to be indispensable for the married state; and I hope I have expressed these sentiments beyond the possibility of a mistake.

LETTER XLV.

TO MISS CARADINE.

Belmont House.

As spring approaches, we prepare for our return to Oakwood. I long to see my father and mother; but I shall always love this place, where I have exchanged sickness for health, and misery for peace. I shall be sorry to part with the Brudenells; part, perhaps *for ever*. There is something unpleasant in the words, if they regard only a trifle; but when they mark the term of our separation from those whom gratitude and their own merit bid us love, they are awful.

In my regrets at parting I do not

include any for Henry Brudenell, whose fine black eyes promise more than they perform. While his exploits and anecdotes were new, I thought him entertaining and interesting; when they were repeated, the form only of the man remained. I shall not be sorry, on another account; for be it idleness, vanity, or love, I find him so extremely troublesome, that I am sometimes obliged to behave almost rudely to him, which is much against my wishes.

Charles Oakwood has been this fortnight on a visit to his mother. I could not have imagined I should miss him so much as I do. Yet, on reflection, it is natural enough; when he was always at my elbow; ready to walk, to ride, or stay at home, just as he saw me disposed. He returns to attend us into Yorkshire.

Mrs. Oakwood has received two letters from Mrs. Goldacre in the course of the winter. In the first she inveighs bitterly against her neighbourhood, and the situation of her house, but says little of her husband; in the second she does not spare him.

I have often remarked the number of novels in Mrs. Oakwood's library; and the other day, meeting her accidentally there, I expressed my surprise, and told her I had always imagined that novels were calculated for a circulating library, and not for that of a woman of sense and general reading.

"My dear Margaret," said she, "men may pretend to despise novels, and you may judge of them without having read them; but, in this world of many sorrows, I hold it good to be amused, and I pity the man or woman

whom they will not amuse. Novels," continued she, "when well written, are, like comedies, pictures of manners; and in addition to this, some of them are pictures of places. Who that has read the Arabian Tales, but has a perfect idea of Bagdat, and the manners and customs of the east? Who that has read Hau Kiou Choan is not thoroughly acquainted with the domestic habits of the Chinese? And Emily Montague, and Hartley House, give us a knowledge of Canada and India, beyond the most elaborate descriptions. The day is so bad that we can neither of us go out; I will take a book and read here; do you the same; take down a novel, and be convinced of your error."

By chance I took the Castle of Otranto; and having read for an hour, "Surely," said I, "this heap of

wild impossibilities is not deserving of your general recommendation of novels!"

"Horace Walpole," said Mrs. Oakwood, threw away talents on the Castle of Otranto, which might have been much better employed. He made castles and spectres the romance of the day; and has to answer for the sins of a multitude of followers, who have ransacked their imaginations for all that is terrific in and out of nature."

I then took down the History of Indiana Danby; but stopped at the words, "Charming man!" "Adorable Indiana!" "Angelic sweetness!" "I am afraid I shall remain a heretic still," said I. "How came this to find a place in your collection?"

"*Indiana Danby*, my dear," said Mrs. Oakwood, "is a novel of the

middle ages. The shining light of the ancients, such as Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and perhaps Mrs. Haywood, was set; and that of the moderns, such as Dr. Moore, Holcroft, Godwin, Miss Burney, and Miss Edgeworth, not yet risen. You have there a sentimental heroine, copied from Clarissa and Harriet Byron; and a sprightly character, a pale-faced imitation of Miss Howe and Miss Grandison; but they are both obliged to describe themselves, like the famous painter, who wrote underneath his bird, *This is a Cock*; or you would not perceive the loveliness of one, or the wit of the other. Yet," continued Mrs. Oakwood, "I read such trash with pleasure, at ten or twelve years of age; and, despicable as it is, I believe it contributed to give an easy epistolary style to myself and my companions in the

neighbouring villages, who corresponded with each other daily, and generally were the bearers of our own letters. My style, indeed, was thought so extraordinary, that I was publicly accused by my correspondents, of having copied a part of my epistles from Lady Catesby's Letters; a book which, fortunately, I never saw. But I have run away from your question. Indiana Danby has long been dead. Probably this is the only memorial of her now existing. I met with it by chance, and bought it, to see what alteration forty years had made in my opinion of books. I find my former notions, with respect to Indiana Danby, quite obsolete."

"You like the novels of Holcroft and Godwin, then!" said I.

"I am greatly indebted to both those gentlemen," replied Mrs. Oak-

wood, "for the entertainment they have afforded me. I think Caleb Williams an extraordinary performance, in exciting an interest, almost to agony, without the intervention of almighty love; and Hugh Trevor deserves a place by the side of Roderick Random, if not of Gil Blas."

"I have read Smollett's novels," said I, "and I think Roderick Random the best of them."

"That is a point I never could determine," said Mrs. Oakwood. "My preference hovers between that, which was his first, and Humphrey Clinker, which was his last novel. They are both excellent; and they are more interesting when we view him, in both, the hero of his own tale. He is the youthful Roderick, thrown upon the world, without a protector or guide; struggling with difficulties, and rising

superior to them by his ardent spirit: and he is the valetudinarian Matthew Bramble, whose jaundiced eye, as Sterne expresses it, sees every thing yellow: though Sterne might have excepted Edinburgh, where he turns the grossest filth to white. Still he could paint his own foibles admirably, and shew them to the world. I think I do not know a book in which character is so nicely discriminated, or so uniformly kept up, as in Humphrey Clinker. Each person is made to view the same event in a light exactly suited to his age, temper, and situation, and each speaks of it in a manner which would not suit any other."

"I have read Evelina," said I, "and I think, among the moderns, as you call them, character has been very well drawn by Miss Burney."

"Every young woman of feeling,"

replied Mrs. Oakwood, " will bear testimony to the propriety of Miss Burney's *Evelina;* and her Sir Clement Willoughby, her Brangtons, her Madame Duval, and her Captain Mirvan, are excellent; if, indeed, any captain in the navy were ever so illiterate and vulgar. The characters in her *Cecilia* are scarcely inferior, Her Delvilles and her Harrels; her Larolles, Meadows and Morris; her Hobson and Simkins, are well supported. Her Briggs is truly humourous; but I have the same objection to him as to Captain Mirvan; his manners are too low for his station. There is a calm, quiet dignity in the character of the heroine, which pleases me much. She now and then falls into a trifling mistake of conduct, incompatible with her penetration and firmness; but perhaps her history

could not have been extended to five volumes without. The wild character of Albany pleases me not at all. I believe he could not have existed; and, if it were possible, that he could not have been admitted into such company. But, upon the whole, the author shews great knowledge of the human mind, and great dexterity in the plot."

"I think Miss Burney wrote another novel; did not she?" demanded I.

"She did, my dear," said Mrs. Oakwood, "and I have read it; but it made so little impression on me that I acknowledge I have forgotten the name."

"Now we are talking of female novel writers," said I, "do me the favour to tell me what you think of Miss Owenson."

"I have read only her *Wild Irish Girl*," replied Mrs. Oakwood; "and I like her description of the manners of her countrymen, and her appeals to the justice and humanity of the English, in their favour; but I think her narrative too barren of incident, till towards the conclusion; and then it is destitute of probability. But her language—In what part of her own vocabulary can I do justice to her language! Her rage for words is unappeasable. After exhausting the English tongue, she coins new words; and, still unsatisfied, she quotes Latin, French, and Italian. In a book of 261 pages, with twenty-three lines in each, there are 2591 epithets; many of which are compound, such as *intuitively-elegant*, *impressively-touching*, and *druidically-venerable*. When I tell you that she talks of the *sylphid*

elegance of spheral beauty being united to the symmetrical contour which constitutes the luxury of human loveliness, I think I need say no more.

"But it is easier to be severe on the faults of authors, my dear Margaret," continued Mrs. Oakwood, "than to attain their excellencies. 'If to do were as easy as to say what were good to do, houses had been churches, and poor men's cottages prince's palaces;' or something very like it; for I do not exactly remember the words, or which of Shakspeare's characters it is that speaks them."

LETTER XLVI.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL, BELMONT COTTAGE.

Oakwood.

I AM once more arrived at Oakwood, and in that humble conveyance called a post-chaise; but after a journey that will almost make me renounce such a one in future. Our first stage from Belmont afforded us a post-chaise which discomposed both my maid and me. She was vexed at its shabby appearance, I was afraid it would moulder to pieces around us. Our second stage afforded none, and we took the old one forward; but we changed horses, and I had a more serious apprehension added to the first.

When all was ready, the hostler took a little boy about ten years of age, by the waistband of the breeches, and set him on horseback to officiate as post-boy. He soon shewed us that he was not placed there for nothing; for he flourished his whip, jogged his elbows, eyed his harness, and encouraged his horses, with all the grimaces of a real post-boy. We laughed very heartily at this miniature of a man; this perfect post-boy just come out of the egg-shell; till my mirth gave way to my fears for our safety, and I silenced that of Margaret and Anson. Jocko had heard our laughter, which he construed into applause, and drove at a furious rate down the hills. Though I could not doubt his science, I was certain he must be deficient in strength, in case his horses should make a false step, and I ordered him to slacken his pace. Elated with

his own skill and our approbation, he was not inclined to listen to my remonstrances; but he had the good fortune to bring us in safety to the end of the stage in his own way.

My cares reminded me of a Dutch gentleman, whom I was formerly very well acquainted with. I had been dining with him and his sister at the house of a friend, and was bringing them home. It was winter; the evening was dark and tempestuous; the road but indifferent; and I was not then without my fears. "O," said the lady, "dis is noting. I did once travel wid my broder in Germny, when it was dark, and holes in de road to overturn de carriage; and de coachman was oblige to lead de horses, and feel de way before dem, wid his feet."

"And were not you very much frightened?" said I.

"O yes, indeed," replied the lady, "and I did wake my broder; but he said dat was de business of de coachman, not of him; so he did sleep again."

When the puppet of a post-boy had set us down, I bade James send him to me for his perquisite, that I might accompany it with an admonition to drive with more moderation in future. The child looked up in my face, and observed, that his cattle were worn down, and more likely to stumble if they went slow than fast.

"These are facts I cannot dispute," said I, "and there is your three shillings. But remember one little circumstance, that at the rate you drive, if a horse *should* stumble, it is probable destrution to yourself and the travellers your chaise."

Next morning, when the chaise drew up to the door, the post-boy having occa-

sion to move on a little, one of the horses lay down. Here my fears were for the man; I had none for myself; for I have a natural antipathy to restive horses, and was in no danger of taking one, when known. I had him therefore sent back, and another brought in his place; notwithstanding the assurances of the innkeeper and his wife, and the attestations of the hostler and chambermaid, that the horse had never shewn any ill dispositions before, and that he would be sure to go quietly now. The master and hostler had totally forgotten, what James told me afterwards, that they had seen the horse, a few minutes before, lie down at his stable-door; while he was being put to the chaise.

In the afternoon, when our vehicle looked sound, our man and horses capable and willing, and our road was

good, I thought certainly the earth opened to receive us; for I could not otherwise account for our sinking so low. I called to the post-boy to stop. Anson, who was withinside on account of rain, and who was on the falling side, scrambled out at a window; Charles, who, by this time, was come up, helped Margaret out after; and when this was performed, I was discovered in the bottom of the chaise, rolled up like a hedgehog, and prepared to meet misfortune. My first motion in a carriage, on the approach of danger, is to let down the glasses; my second, to sit on the bottom, that I may have the less way to fall; and my third, to gather myself up as close as possible, that I may have the fewer points exposed to injury. All this I had done while Anson and Margaret were getting out of the chaise. I now got out, in my turn; and found

we were quit for our fears. The lynch pin had dropped out; the chaise had come to the ground; and the post-boy, instead of invoking the devil, declared that it was God's mercy it had not happened in coming down a steep hill we had just past; as the chaise must have gone over, if it had.

We were upon high moors, distant from the past and the succeeding towns, and did not choose to trust the post-boy's substitute for a lynch pin. A little public-house appeared before us, the only one in the intermediate space, where the Duke of York stood in full uniform, with his hat in his hand, inviting travellers to enter, and promising Entertainment for Man and Horse. We accepted the invitation, and found our part of the entertainment was to consist of eggs and bacon. For lodging, there were two decent beds in one

chamber, which Anson retained, one for me, the other for Margaret and herself; and another bed in a small cabin, which would accommodate Charles. We let the man conduct his post-chaise slowly back, bespoke another for the next morning, and were satisfied with our quarters.

Our hostess offered us some old newspapers, for our amusement; and as I found their contents little interesting, I tried the method of reading two columns together, instead of the usual way of reading one; a specimen of which I met with, in a Magazine, forty years ago. The sheet of paper inclosed with this, will shew you the result of this way of rendering old news new.

The night proved dark and rainy. As we were sitting down to supper, a carriage drove up to the door, and we heard the landlady say, "I am very

sorry for you and the lady, sir; but indeed I can't lodge you; for the house is full of company, and all the beds are bespoke. It never rains but it pours; we've either too much luck, or no luck at all; now we're oblige to turn gentry away, and sometimes nobody comes, for a month together."

"You shall not turn us away," said the gentleman; "for I will not venture over the moors to-night. You can lay us a bed on the floor, and the coachman can sleep with his horses."

The step was let down, and two respectable elderly people entered the kitchen. We invited them to share our parlour and our repast; and rather than suffer them to lie on the floor, I gave Margaret half my bed, and relinquished the other bed to them, on condition of the mistress of the house providing for Anson with her own

family. Charles went to his cabin, and James shared the straw with the coachman.

The moment the old gentleman was asleep, he began to snore in a manner which astonished my senses.

"Did you ever hear any body snore like my husband?" said the old lady.

"Never, in my life," replied I.

"I am afraid it will disturb you," said she.

"I shall give up all idea of sleep," answered I, with some vexation.

Margaret and I listened, till his tones became so varied, and so ludicrous, that we began to laugh. The good old gentlewoman could not help joining us. We laughed so heartily we shook the bed, and so long that, wearied out, we fell fast asleep, in spite of her husband's treble and bass. I have heard my grandmother say, *every thing has two*

handles. We certainly took the old gentleman's nose by the right.

We arrived at Oakwood without any farther accident, where my brother received me most affectionately. He had numbered the weeks till my appointed return, and subtracted every one that passed over his head. The next day he took me into his grounds, and shewed me his improvements. "Brother," said I, "suppose you were to plant me in some corner of your estate! On that slope, for instance, which overlooks the park! it is a charming situation. You are as fond of building as of planting; of employing the trowel as wielding the spade; of rearing edifices, useful and ornamental as of rearing evergreens, and flowering shrubs; and of nothing so fond as of your sister. Build me a house in which I may have my old friends and my old servants about me; and do not let me leave you."

"Are you serious?" demanded he.

"I am," replied I.

"Why then," said he, "I never dipped my hands in mortar with so much pleasure as I shall do on this occasion. "Say where you will live, and I will mark the spot now."

You may have heard of men whose promptitude is such, that they do not defer till to-morrow what should be done to-day; but my brother goes beyond them; he does to-day what should be done to-morrow. The ground was marked; the plan was drawn; the masons and carpenters sent for, immediately. They know Mr. Oakwood so well, and are employed by him so often, that they leave any work at his summons. When I was last here, I advised him to retain them by the year, as some families do their physician. I hope you love me well enough to follow me into York-

shire; and that you will share my cottage with me, a part, at least, of every summer.

John Freeman and his wife received their daughter at my hands, and observed her altered looks, with transport. She, like Burns's Nancy, "more lovely seemed than ever." Charles stood by, and devoured her with his looks, but was silent. I believe the sweet girl loves him more than she is aware of herself; but I am afraid of too much influence on the part of her father; for John is extremely eager to bestow his daughter upon the heir of Oakwood.

I fancy, of all governments, John Freeman would like the patriarchal best; where every man was absolute sovereign in his own house, and saw no superior out of it. "Margaret," he says, "you know I never controuled

you: you was always at liberty to choose or refuse whoever you pleased; but you must be out of your senses to refuse Mr. Charles Oakwood." It will be well for Margaret if she be not out of her senses; for I believe John's love of liberty would end in an attempt at arbitrary power.

I want to know, my dear friend, whether we naturally admire most that sort of excellence which most resembles our own. Whether, if I be brown, I should prefer a brown beauty? whether, if I be tall, I should prefer a tall woman? whether, if I make verses, I should prefer poetry to other kinds of reading? whether, if I write good letters, I should prefer Lady Mary Wortley to all writers in prose? You will perceive that I want a proof that I am a good letter-writer. I have been led into this train of thinking by

Espriella's Letters on England; a work which my brother has received from London in my absence, and I have been reading since my return. Espriella admires Lady Mary above all women, and he has caught a large piece of her ladyship's mantle. I have ever admired her above all women, and may I not hope I have caught a rag? If you can answer me in the affirmative, do; and I will strut about in my new finery. If you are disposed to say no, forget I have asked you the question, and spare me further mortification.

My brother having lately let one of his farms to a new tenant, the neighbours, as is usual on such occasions, have given the new comer what is called a *plough-day*; that is, each affords the use of all his ploughs, and the labour of all his men and horses,

on an appointed day, to assist him in preparing his ground for sowing. You will have some idea of Yorkshire hospitality, and the appetites of Yorkshire ploughmen, from the quantity of food provided on this occasion. There were about eighty ploughs.

Twelve bushels of wheat was made into seventeen large white loaves and fifty-one dumplings; in the dumplings were forty-two pounds of currants and fourteen pounds of raisins; seven pounds of sugar was put into a proportionate quantity of melted butter and vinegar, for sauce to these magnificent dumplings.

One hundred and ninety-six pounds of beef—— "Hold," say you, "beef, by ancient charter, has the precedence of pudding." Pardon me, not on a Yorkshire plough-day: custom, which is the strongest of all charters, gives it

to pudding. One hundred and ninety-six pounds of beef, exclusive of a quantity that the farmer's wife has not yet got an account of,

Two large hams, with fourteen pounds of peas for puddings.

Three large Cheshire cheeses, and two home-made, of twenty-eight pounds weight each.

Ninety-nine gallons of ale, and two of rum.

EXTRACTS FROM NEWSPAPERS,

Reading two columns together;

Inclosed with the foregoing letter.

The ladies cup to be run for by—Lord Chief Baron Macdonald, and Mr. Justice Heath.

A sturgeon measuring six feet in length — was confirmed in the cathedral church of Carlisle.

A message from the lords informed

the house — it was two to one on the Precipitate filly.

Young gentlemen are boarded and educated — prepared by Dr. Solomon, Gilead House, near Liverpool.

Arrived at this port, the Ellison, with 19 fish, and 450 butts of blubber — the most magnificent fête the season has produced.

This day's market was tolerably well supplied — with one pound Bank of England notes.

Fourteen men passengers, besides women and children, going to reside — in an owl's nest, on the top of our old church steeple.

Next Tuesday will come on the election for the borough — Conditions of sale as usual.

Married at Saint George's church, Hanover Square — rheumatisms, palsies, and all sorts of gouty affections.

My son James was very dangerously ill by — a round dress of soft white satin.

A gold mine has been discovered in India — was stopped by two foot-pads near Windsor.

Were taken alive, in the river Severn, near Gloucester, on Thursday last — nine hundred and twenty-two youths, of both sexes.

Died at Westminster, after a long and severe illness — the liberty and independence of the people.

Yesterday a boy threw himself out of a two pair of stairs window — according to act of parliament.

Arrived from London, with the newest fashions — five heifers and fifteen store pigs.

Green peas were yesterday sold in Covent-garden market — by the bishop of that diocese.

Fifteen sail of the line, ready for sea — were ordered to lie on the table.

A strong wind, blowing from the south-west — filled the house, and met with great applause.

A public procession to church will take place—of cattle, sheep, pigs, and prime cheese.

The usual course of education recommences — at Sir James Branscomb and Co.'s Temple of Good Fortune.

Newcastle Races concluded — with oaths and frantic gestures.

Many of the passengers possessed considerable property — in five fathom water; the shore rocky.

Several bills went through committees of the whole house — representing Napoleon on one side.

Last week Sir Francis Burdett paid a visit to our county gaol — and received assurances of protection.

There was a large assemblage of fat and lean cattle — at the Friends' meeting-house, Warwick.

On Thursday died in childbed, Mrs. Baron — had twenty-one pigs at one litter.

A number of well authenticated and extraordinary cures — were all convicted of forgery.

Committed to York castle, since our last — his Grace, the duke of N. for the term of ninety-nine years.

At last the dog made a keen and steady point — to represent the opulent and independent county of Gloucester.

Hardy's new invented blacking-powder — to beautify the face and hands.

Evening dress for January — 117 oak trees.

Yesterday a coroner's inquest was

held upon the body, and the jury brought in their verdict — a grand dinner.

Colonel Crawford brought forward his motion on — Lord Sackville's whirligig, carrying twelve stone.

A capital new-erected mansion-house — was taken out alive, through a hole cut in the bottom of the vessel.

I received your fresh supply of medicine in two double boxes — and heard the deceased cry out, Murder!

Wanted, on ample security — a humble address to his Majesty.

A servant belonging to Charles Chapman, Esq. of Bathford — measures 3 yards 6 inches from his snout to the end of his tail.

To be sold by private contract — the rank of major-general in the army.

Barley and malt are at a stand —

a stock of drugs, to be taken at a fair valuation.

It is intended to confer the honours of peerage on — the body of a man unknown.

To be sold, a quantity of excellent bacon — for promoting christianity among the Jews.

A provincial grand lodge was holden — the contents of which have not yet transpired.

Stocks closed this evening — and several persons were severely wounded.

On Sunday the 18th two sermons will be preached — prime, seasoned, goose feather beds.

LETTER XLVII.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

I HAVE visited Mr. and Mrs. Nevil, who reside at present at their house at Lovewell; my brother and this gentleman, who had each something to pardon in the other, have shaken hands cordially; and he and his wife are passing a week at Oakwood Hall, six days of which are gone.

It is generally believed in the Dale that Mr. Nevil was attached to Margaret Freeman, and that love gave way to ambition and family pride—poor

substitutes for well-placed affection! I cannot entertain a doubt of the truth of common opinion in this instance, from the emotion Mr. Nevil betrayed on his first meeting Margaret here; a meeting which I thought proper to accelerate as much as possible after his arrival, lest the anticipation of it might prove painful to one, if not to both.

Mr. Nevil knew that Margaret was expected, and whenever the door opened, he instantly turned towards it, with a look of great anxiety. Fortunately, his wife was not in the room. When Margaret entered, he rose to meet her, with a face from which all the blood was fled, and a tongue which refused to speak. Margaret's countenance shewed a heart at ease. She held out her hand, expressed her pleasure on seeing an old friend, inquired after his health, and that of

Mrs. Nevil. The perfect self-possession of Margaret subdued in some degree the agitation of Mr. Nevil; he answered her inquiries, though in a hurried manner. He was then mechanically advancing to the door; but recollecting himself, he made a strong effort, and returned to his seat. I introduced the subject of the improvements at Lovewell; Margaret joined me, by asking questions; and, before Mrs. Nevil entered, her husband had regained a tolerable degree of composure.

Mrs. Nevil is a little genteel woman, nearly forty years of age, of an unhappy, dissatisfied temper; so fond of her husband, and so jealous of his affection, that she can scarcely bear him to be out of her sight. Mr. Nevil is handsome; at least twelve years younger than his wife; a man of ex-

cellent sense and great learning; and, if I am not mistaken, he would not wish to appear in her sight, if circumstances allowed him to avoid it. To me, who cannot help looking further than the surface of things, it appears that, conscious he feels no affection for his wife, his whole life is an effort to prevent it from being observed, either by herself or the world. He weighs his own words and actions, lest his first impulse should be contrary to his duty; and he complies with her requisitions, be they ever so absurd and contradictory. In a word, he has married family, and acquired riches; and the study of his honest mind is to pay the price he offered for them. If any thing could add to these galling restrictions, it must be to see the young woman he once passionately loved; to see her reasonable and in-

genuous, contributing to every one's happiness, and carrying with her the affection of every creature around her. But there was yet another torment reserved for poor Nevil; to see a young man of a good family, large fortune, and great expectations, seeking with the utmost assiduity to obtain the prize, which he might possibly have secured for himself. If Margaret's mind were cast in a mould common to some of her sex, she might indulge her vanity by exhibiting the chains worn by her present lover to him who endeavoured to shake them off; but she is rather studious to avoid it.

At breakfast, Mrs. Nevil said to her husband, "What do you intend to do this morning?"

"Whatever you please," was his answer.

"Perhaps you have formed some plan?" said the lady.

"None at all," replied the gentleman; "I will take a drive in the chariot with you, if you like it."

"No, I have the head-ach; I shall not go out this morning."

"Then I will read to you and Mrs. Oakwood, if you will give me leave."

"You are very good, but my head would not bear reading; and you shall not stay at home on my account; I know it is not good for your health."

"I believe exercise of some kind is better for one's health; and if you cannot bear the carriage, I will go out on horseback."

"Then do, by all means—I beg you will."

After some time, I saw a tear steal-

ing silently down Mrs. Nevil's cheek: her husband saw it too; and, more aware of the cause than myself, he said, "I wish I could prevail upon you to try an airing in the carriage, instead of obliging me to go alone."

"Why, to confess the truth," replied the lady, "I was thinking of it. I thought perhaps it might relieve my head-ach, which increases every moment; but I was afraid I should disappoint you, for I know you prefer riding on horseback."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Nevil, "I prefer the carriage, if you will go in it, and I will order it immediately. He then rose, and rang the bell; and when the servant came, he desired his coachman might be told to be at the door in an hour.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Nevil; "I think we shall have a pleasant drive;

and my head is already something better."

"I am very glad of it," rejoined her husband; "that is the first requisite towards a pleasant drive; the rest will follow of course."

After some time, Mrs. Nevil said, "I am certain you go in the carriage only to oblige me; and, really, my head is so much better, that there is no occasion in the world for it. I know that riding on horseback will do you more good, and I am resolved I will not go."

"I beg you will go," replied her husband. "I assure you that you will oblige me if you will go."

"No, you must excuse me. You are very kind, and I know your kindness prompts you to ask what would not be your own choice."

"Believe me, my own choice is to

go in the carriage with you," said Mr. Nevil rising, and again ringing the bell; "and I shall desire your maid to bring your bonnet and pelisse."

The lady's countenance cleared up; the bonnet and pelisse were put on; and the chariot drove to the door. Would you believe that, at the door, fresh scruples seized the unfortunate wife? "I cannot go," she said; "I ought not to go. It is my duty and my desire to conform to your inclination, and I know that would lead you to go on horseback: you would see the country better; you would enjoy the air better; it is better exercise; and I am determined you shall not deprive yourself of these advantages, merely to gratify me with your company; I positively will not go."

"Let me intreat you to go. I earnestly beg of you to go," said Mr.

Nevil, seizing his wife's hand, to hand her into the carriage. "You shall go."

"Send the carriage back, and order your horse," said the lady, struggling to withdraw her hand, "for, upon my honour, I neither can nor will go."

Mr. Nevil dropped the hand, and ordered the carriage to be put up; the lady ran hastily to her own apartment; the gentleman took his hat, and walked out. He returned in about an hour, when a message from his lady, delivered by her maid, informed him that she had been in hysterics during the whole time, and that she desired to see him. He proceeded directly to her dressing-room; and the result of the conference was, that the lady recovered; the carriage was again ordered; the married pair took their drive; and appeared satisfied with each other at dinner.

Such, I suppose, are the usual sub-

jects of discussion and disquietude at Lovewell Hall; but to these are now added a source of mental misery peculiar to Oakwood. Whether the report of her husband's former attachment have reached the ear of the wife; or whether youth, beauty, and rare endowments only strike Mrs. Nevil with dismay, I know not: but it is certain that the small degree of red which sometimes finds a place in her cheek, vanishes on the approach of Margaret. Yet does this ingenious self-tormentor make it a point of love and honour towards her husband, to treat his fancied favourite with distinguished kindness; a kindness which is unobserved by him, undesired by Margaret, and which is a most painful effort to herself. Nevil looks melancholy upon the whole—and who would not, that was the victim of such

fantastical and unappeasable fondness! If he loved more, or his wife less, there might be a chance of some portion of happiness; as it is, their case is hopeless.

To-morrow produces a separation which will be welcomed by us all. They have been wretched, and we have witnessed wretchedness.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO MISS CARADINE.

Oakwood.

You will be surprised to learn, my dear Maria, that I have consented to become the wife of Charles Oakwood. Such is woman! Though in this instance, as in many others, woman has not changed alone, for circumstances have changed, also. In the course of the last year, and that part of the present which is past, I have loved, have been loved, deserted, and have determined to be the wife of another man! It is too much; yet it seems to have been almost inevitable.

I am truly sensible of the tried affec-

tion of Charles Oakwood, and grateful for the unwearied attentions he shews me, even to the neglect of himself. I like his person and his society. His family and fortune are as much above my wishes, as they were beyond my hopes; and great is my pleasure in saying, that though his family have taken no part in the affair, it has been obvious that they had no objection to his being united to one so greatly his inferior in fortune and station. Are these sufficient inducements for the decision I have made? they ought to be; or I have decided wrong: yet there is another, which, perhaps, outweighs them all — my father.

To talk of compulsion, in this age and country, would be idle; and if such a thing were practicable, I should resist it; but how can one resist the continued intreaties of those one loves!

You know my father. You know that he has never experienced contradiction in his own house; that my mother, an excellent, kind-hearted, domestic woman, has avoided his commands by complying with his wishes; and that I, who have been the object of his tenderness, his pride, and his hopes, have been indulged with an imaginary freedom, which never, except in the present instance, pretended to oppose his opinions: what impression, then, must those opinions have made, when they were repeated, directly or indirectly, every hour of my waking life, in the form of inducements, arguments, admonitions, or reproofs!

"What a handsome man Charles Oakwood is," my father would say. "I think him one of the completest men I ever saw in my life!"

"I cannot deny it," I might reply; "he is a handsome man."

"Yes; and he is a good-natured, generous man."

"I believe he is."

"And he is a sensible man; sensible enough. You may depend upon it, Margaret, that good, useful, common sense—sense that will conduct a man well through the world—is much better than Greek and Latin. I look upon Greek and Latin to be very unnecessary things. I am well acquainted with the history of the Greeks and Romans, without having learned Greek and Latin; as I am with that of the Jews, without having learned Hebrew."

"A knowledge of the learned languages is not necessary, though it may be valuable; but the good sense of Mr. Charles Oakwood has scarcely

been proved. He has unexpectedly come into the possession of a large fortune at an early age; and at first he did not evince his discretion, either in the disposal of his money, or the choice of his associates."

"I am sure he has shewn his good sense in choosing you, and he has committed no follies since he knew you. He has seen his error and repaired it, and his confidence in your prudence is a proof of his own. Besides, what would be folly and extravagance in a man of small fortune, is right and proper where a man has a large one. Charles Oakwood's fortune would allow you to indulge yourself in all your vagaries of poems, prints, and paintings; it would e'en make a lady of you at once."

"But, father, I do not know that ladies are happier than myself. Mrs.

Oakwood carries happiness about her; but look at Mrs. Nevil, who has married the man she loved, and seems miserable; look at Miss Caradine, whose father has spent half her inheritance, and would have dissipated the other half, if the worthy Mr. Goldacre had not prevented it: and if I could look into the world, I have no doubt that I should see ladies conforming to troublesome customs from which I am free, and sacrificing that time to strangers, which I would give to my own family."

"But if you are so obstinate as to reject Charles Oakwood, tell me what you expect. You have given up all thoughts of Millichamp, I suppose?"

"I have."

"Then pray consider what prospect you have before you. The parson fell in love with you, and then bounced

out of the house, and married a great lady. Millichamp loved you, and defied his rich uncle to his teeth, for your sake; and when he knew he might have you, he vanished like smoke."

"Millichamp disappeared because he thought I preferred another."

"Well, well, it's all one for that; he's gone. I liked him; he was an honourable young man, though a strange one; but he's either dead, or studying Greek in some corner where nobody can find him; he's out of the question."

"He is indeed."

"Well, then, what remains, if you won't have Charles Oakwood? Men in your own station you might have had by dozens, and so you might have still; but then you must look to the liking, and the making of butter

and cheese; and your taste does not lie that way. The utmost of your hopes would be some racketty gentleman farmer, with an estate of four or five hundred pounds a year; who, like Sylvester of Rockcliff, would drink as much tea at a race-ball as would scald a sow; and as much wine, ale, or brandy at his visits, as would send him home drunk, over every hedge and rail in his way."

"At present, my utmost wish is to remain with you and my mother in this cottage."

"Why, that would do very well at present; but bye and bye you would be worse off than your mother and I are; for you would have no daughter, as we have, to smooth your grey hairs. And when we were gone, you would find it very melancholy living in this cottage, with only a rambling servant wench, and a domestic cat."

"Melancholy, indeed; but I hope very far distant."

"Why, it may be distant; we are not old; and, blessed be God, we are very hearty; you might be our comfort for many years; and yet you could determine upon going into Kent, and, into Lancashire, and leaving us to die by ourselves, when our time was come; and now you can't marry a wealthy fine gentleman, whom Providence has sent to our very door. If you would but marry Charles Oakwood; instead of going to the Hall in the evening to sit with the Squire only, though, to be sure, I honour the Squire, I might sit with my own daughter, and see her at the head of the family. Your poor mother, too, might nurse her grandchildren; and when she wanted it, you might nurse her."

Such conversations as this have ended

on my part with tears. At other times, instead of arguments and persuasions, my father has taken a higher tone, and said—what I cannot repeat. My mother's wishes accord with his; though they are seldomer expressed, and in a gentler manner.

At length, I have asked myself why I should endure such persecution myself, and why occasion such uneasiness to those I love; when the alternative is marrying a man, to whom I cannot make one reasonable objection, who fervently loves me, and whom I prefer to any other? The result of these questions I have told you already. If I have decided right, wish me joy; if wrong, fortitude.

My father received my resolution with transport, my mother with great satisfaction; and the former instantly carried it to him who was happiest to

receive it. I will not trouble you with the warm effusions of his grateful and affectionate heart, or the kind felicitations of Mr. and Mrs. Oakwood. All this *must* make me happy; and if it did not, I would almost be content to be otherwise.

Had I any fears of a remaining attachment to the man who so hastily fled from his engagement, the world should not bribe me to enter into a second, myself; but, as far as I can ascertain the state of my own heart, I have but one wish to form respecting Millichamp, which is, that I may never see him more.

Solemnly to vow love to one person, while the heart is devoted to another, is impious to our Maker, dishonest to the object, and misery to ourselves. Had it been possible for me to have entertained such an idea, the sight of

Mr. Nevil, who, with his wife, has been passing a week at the Hall, would have deterred me from putting it in practice. Mrs. Nevil is a discontented being, whom the conduct of an angel could not satisfy; indeed the conduct of her husband is almost as faultless. But how changed is he! Absorbed in his own reflections, he scarcely mingles in conversation. Even our favorite topics of literature, which I introduced more than once, failed to interest him. He seems attentive to duty; but dead to enjoyment. Mr. Nevil betrayed much agitation on our first meeting; but he never once made any allusion to our former acquaintance; except his saying, "It was Mrs. Nevil's wish to come here, not mine," might be supposed to proceed from the recollection of it.

I ride on horseback every day with

Charles Oakwood, and some day, before it be long, we shall extend our ride to Oatley Manor, where I shall introtroduce to you a man who I hope will share your friendship. I must also consult you on different preparations and arrangements for the approaching ceremony, and request the favour of your presence and support at it. You may possibly never receive another letter from your faithful friend with the signature of

MARGARET FREEMAN.

LETTER XLIX.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

MARGARET Freeman has made Charles the happiest man in the world, by consenting to become his bride, and my brother and I rejoice at his success. I cannot believe that Margaret's attachment to him is so strong as it was to Millichamp; but she is too good and too disinterested to marry him, if it were not sufficient to secure the happiness of both, so far as it depends upon their affection to each other.

The news has electrified the Dale, a proof of which you will have in the following conversation.

The park of Oakwood is bounded on one side by what is called the town street; that is, a broad cart road with cottages scattered along it. Among the many seats the park affords, is one, under a hawthorn bush, which is separated from the town street only by the pales. On this I was sitting, a few mornings ago, when two neighbours met in the street so near me, that to have avoided hearing their discourse, I must have quitted the place.

"Hasta hard ta news?" said one of these gentlemen to the other; and, without allowing time for an answer, he added, "Dost ta knaw at Peggy Freeman's gaeing t'marry ta young Squire?"

"Ay, that's auld news," replied the other. "Oll t'warld knaws at Peggy's a pratty wench; and Ise nea to be tauld naw at fine gentlemen like pratty wenches: my granny cud ha tell'd that afore I was bworn."

"Ay, ay, may be so; like o' tat's been knawn e'er sin ta gentleman left t'cuntry at was ommost awlis, mwornin, noon, and neeght i' a brown study. But naw I tell ye at young Squire's actilly an bony fighty gaeing ta hae Peggy it kirk."

"Ye might ha tell'd me at kirk was gaeing t'dance a hornpipe; but Ise nae bund t'believe it."

"But ta butler himsel tell'd me on't, and it's as true as t' Bible. Does ta think at butler does n't knaw t'lung and ta short on't?"

Two men standing talking together is a mark not to be missed by a third.

"Weel, what's a foot here?" said another voice.

"Why here," said Mr. Incredulous, "Tom Whacker says t'young Squire's for haeing Peggy Freeman; and I say thea at will believe it may, for, by my truly, its na me: I'm nae sike ninny-hammer."

"An here," said Mr. Newsman, "is Yed Stocker's sie a fule tat he wadna believe a true tale when he hard yan."

"Hoad your tongues, yan an t'other; Ise tell ye oll," said the last comer. "Ise uphole it; I knaw the reeght an the wrang on't. Peggy might ha had t'young Squire lang eneugh sin, an sae she might t'other young gentleman at run ower fwoke and did na knaw at they stood in's way; an t'young Squire went down on his bare

knees, an tell'd her at he'd gie her oll he was worth it warld, and her wad but hae him, and sae she made ta forgetful fine gentleman goway; and, ae wae's t'heart! he was sae sorryful at he run's horse into a coal-pit, and ne'er was hard on mare."

"An he ne'er was hard on mare," said Incredulous, "haw knaw ye at he went intit coal-pit?"

"Ony fule might knaw that weel eneugh, an he saw him gang in," replied the down on his knees man.

"Did ye see him gang in?"

"Mayhap I did n't; but I guess at somebody saw 't; for Ise sartin at I hard on't. But here comes Joe Thacker, and I'll ax him. Joe, did ye ever hear at young gentleman at was at t' Hall, he at didn't knaw what he was doing on, leapt bindfole, horse an

oll, in tit coal-pit, for love o' Peggy Freeman?"

"Nea, by makins," replied Joe, "I ne'er hard o' that, but I was tell'd at he run stark mad, and said he'd be married t' it' mune."

"A raresome fickle wife he'd a had," said one, "awliss a changing!"

"He wadn't o' been tired on's wife, howsomever," said another, "when he'd a fresh un e'ery month."

"I mysel," said Joe, "hae often seen him luking up at t' mune, an talking to't like a player in a barn."

"Ay, ay," said the first newsman, Tom Whacker, "t' young squire run him off; e'erybody knaws that; and coal-pit or mune, yan's much like t'other, its nea hofe a pin's yead t' chuse atween 'em. But Ise tell ye t' hale matter, an that is, at t'young 'Squire's for haeing Peggy directly."

"Seerly, ye dunnat say't?"

"Ay, but I do say't; and I was going to ha tell'd it oll, an Yed Stoker had na threaped me down at t'was oll a lee, when 't butler tell'd me on't himsel."

"I'se seer I'll believe t' butler," says one. "And sae will I," "and I," "and I," echoed a dozen voices; for by this time the assembly was augmented to that number, "sae prithee let's hear't."

"Weel then, ye must knaw," said Whacker, "at it's a done thing; t' lawyers are at wark; t' auld 'Squire wadn't change Peggy for t' best lady i't' land; and as t' Madam Oakwood, there's ne'er a word i' her mouth gud eneugh for her: she'd gie her t' verra cloaths off her back, an ony on 'em war fine eneugh."

"Ah!" groaned a voice I had not

heard before, "see t' luck o' some fwoke! see what it is t' be bworn wi' a silver spune i' one's mouth! I ha fave daughters, mysel, an I should be o'ert sorry an t' warst on 'em was n't as canny, an as pratty, as Meg Freeman, tit full; yet they may milk, an kern, an bake, an fother; an nea notice ta'en on 'em! it warld."

"Ay, neebour," said another voice, "it's e'en sic a like case wi't' maist o' our daughters. But come, Tom, let's hae t rest on't."

"Weel then," resumed Whacker, "Peggy's t'hae a mort o' money settled on her, and a fine coach is making for her, oll ower gould."

"Belike," said another, "she may ne'er set foot upo't' ground when she's t'young 'Squire's lady; t'yearth wonnot be worthy t' touch her shoon."

"Ye'r mista'en on her there," said Stocker; "she may walk a bit naw an tan it park. But dosta knaw ony mare, Tom?"

"Ay, I knaw at wedding ring's bought; and its covered wi' dimunts an riches up tot first joint o't' finger: an as for t'cloaths, nea mon alive can tell what they be for richness!"

There needed no more; each man was now charged to the tip of his tongue, and hastened to deliver the burthen to his family or neighbour. And, as the quality of gold and diamonds was not to be exceeded; the tide, as it flowed through the Dale, could only carry down a greater quantity.

Charles has taken great pleasure in making Margaret a good horsewoman, The beautiful horse she rode at Bel-

mont is now called her own, and she rides out with her intended bridegroom every day. They are now passing a few days at Oatley Manor.

LETTER L.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

How are our gay prospects clouded since I wrote to you last! Then, I could relate to you the conversation of idle rustics; now, I am sick at heart.

In returning from Oatley Manor, Charles and Margaret had to ford a small river that empties itself into our large one a little below; a river which every one fords on horseback, instead of going round by the bridge; which both had passed twenty times before; and which now, though considerably swollen by the late rains, was not

knee deep. In the midst of this, Margaret's horse plunged, lay down, and threw her over his head. Charles, who was leading the way, heard the noise and looked back; and instantly leaping off his horse into the water, he seized Margaret, and carried her to the opposite side of the river.

Ah! that I could tell you such a tale as I did when a similar accident happened to Miss Mornington! but Margaret was brought out of the water, to all appearances lifeless. Charles, in the utmost consternation, sat on the ground; ground soaked with rain, seating Margaret on his knees, that she might not touch it, and supporting her in his arms, while he dispatched his groom to the nearest house for assistance. That house was half a mile distant, and its mistress was not at home. The master offered his taxed

cart, and the man brought it as fast as the sluggish beast that was accustomed to draw it would permit him.

Before the man arrived, Margaret had recovered. Charles wrapped her in his great coat, lifted her into the taxed cart, and placed himself by her side; the cart was then conducted slowly to John Freeman's gate. Margaret was put to bed; and Charles, anxious for her, and inconsiderate with regard to himself, could not be prevailed upon to leave the house till her mother had assured him she had sustained no injury.

Charles, whose wet clothes were not so soon changed as they should have been, and whose blood was not kept in circulation by exercise, was the next day seized with a shivering fit, which ended in a fever. This is the sixth day that he has kept his bed;

and my brother's physician, who almost lives in the house, thinks him in great danger. Margaret is here wholly, and shares with me the care of her unfortunate lover. Shining talents are not necessary to make a man beloved. They may command admiration; but it is generally love that begets love in woman, and the good qualities of the heart that secure its continuance. To the grief which Margaret feels on this occasion, is added the severe reflection that Charles Oakwood's affection for her was the cause of his illness.

Mrs. Goldacre is sent for.

I have written these few lines to inform you of the sad reverse in our situation; but I feel as if I had deserted my post; and I cannot take up my pen again till my nephew is either restored to us, or taken from us.

LETTER LI.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

CHARLES Oakwood sleeps with his fathers in the chancel of the little church at Oakwood, and with him are gone the hopes of an ancient family.

When Charles was given over by the physicians, we thought it right that the melancholy intelligence should be communicated to him, and my brother undertook the task. How would his heart have recoiled at it ten days before, when, blessed with health and

strength, riches and beauty, and blessed with Margaret's love, he looked forward to a day, not distant, which was to have united them for ever! Exhausted by pain, he received it now without emotion. "I am not prepared "for this," he said, "either for the present world or the future. One, however, is still in my power, and I must trust divine mercy for the other. I wish to leave some tokens of my regard to those I love, and I beg you to send immediately for an attorney." His request was instantly complied with, and he dictated his will in the presence of my brother.

Neither Margaret nor I could desert Charles in this hopeless stage of his existence. We both sat in the room the whole night, and till ten o'clock in the morning, when he breathed his

last. We sat, in silent grief, on each side of his bed; and as we watched his latest breath, we each internally were grateful to Providence, that though his sufferings had been most acute, his end was not painful. We continued watching some minutes without motion, to see if the spark of life might yet return; but convinced that it was gone for ever, I took Margaret's hand, and led her into my dressing-room. "Margaret," said I, "all cares for our friend are now over; we must think of ourselves. We have other friends, to whom we are dear; and for their sakes, as well as our own, we must not give way to sorrow. I will order the chariot immediately, and Anson shall attend you to Oatley Manor, where the kindness of your friend Miss Caradine may soothe

your distress." Margaret made no reply, no resistance, no preparation for her removal; and, in half an hour, I saw her set off.

I sat down and meditated on the awful lesson before me. I had only to look back ten months to see the gay, precipitate Charles Oakwood revelling in prosperity which he knew not how to enjoy, and endeavouring to find out ways to dispose of his time and money; when his attachment to a deserving young woman brought him to reason, and the difficulty he found in obtaining her, subdued his vanity and presumption. He was one among a great number of young persons who, camelion-like, take their colour from the objects around them. He had associated with thoughtless extravagant young men, and had imbibed

their notions, such as they were. With Margaret, these had dissolved in empty air. With her, Charles would have become a valuable member of society; his fortune would have been diffused into proper channels; and he would have been a blessing to all around him. Now, behold him, deprived of possessions, enjoyments, sensations, a frightful mass of inanimate matter, which must soon be removed from the face of the earth! The change was great and sudden! But I will not trouble you any further with my reflections; they were such as must have occurred to every one who has lost a friend.

The pomp of death is now over. The removing the body makes a new era in our grief; it is a second parting. Till then the mind is occupied by some business to be done, or duty to

be fulfilled; a stillness succeeds, which makes one feel the whole of one's loss.

Though my brother had frequently reproved the rashness, and laughed at the follies of Charles, he is much affected by his death.

Mr. and Mrs. Goldacre are here; but they arrived too late. The latter wept at the loss of her brother; but she has a hardness of heart that will not allow sorrow to penetrate deep, and an interest in his decease that will afford her consolation.

LETTER LII.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

WHEN the funeral of poor Charles was over, my brother requested Mr. and Mrs. Goldacre and myself to be present at the opening of the will. Charles has left very handsome legacies to his mother and me, which his sister heard without any appearance of discontent, considering them as only lent to us, and coming ultimately to herself. But when she heard that he had left five thousand pounds to Margaret, she took no pains to conceal her vexation. She said that girl was born to give her disturbance; and her brother was a

weak young man, or he would not have suffered himself to be prevailed upon to dispose of his property in so unnatural a manner."

"Why, my dear," said her husband, "you've no occasion to be angry. You'd plenty of money before; and now you've all your brother's estate."

"And whom have I to thank for that?" demanded Barbara. "Not my brother, for he could not deprive me of it. I do not dispute your abilities, Mr. Goldacre, in deciding upon the merits of cotton, whether manufactured or unmanufactured; but I beg you will allow me to judge of propriety of conduct."

"I think it right to mention one circumstance," said my brother, "believe it or not, as you please; it is, that no influence whatever was used over poor Charles in the disposal of

his fortune. I was the only person in the room, except the lawyer; and Charles dictated the whole of the will himself, without one word spoken by me."

"You could not suppose, sir, I hinted at you," said Barbara. "No, the influence was Margaret Freeman's; and it was not deferred till the making of the will."

"I cannot help your indulging suspicions," said my brother; "but if you choose to express them, I must beg the favour of Mrs. Oakwood to hear you." So saying, he left the room. Barbara looked disconcerted. She is afraid of my brother, and might be a loser by offending him. She took a lower key, and, soon after, followed. Her husband remained with me.

"How cleverly Mr. Oakwood manages her!" said Mr. Goldacre. "I

might go out of the room twenty times, and she'd never mind me!"

"She is now the sole heiress of her uncle's estate," said I; "but there is a considerable part, as well as a large sum of money, that he can dispose of as he pleases; and she has a mind of the whole."

"And haven't I a large estate? and have n't I a large sum of money? more than Mr. Oakwood has—no offence, ma'am; and she knows I can leave every clod and every shilling from her, except her jointure; and yet, if I say a word, she's at the top of the room directly; and I suppose now she's got this estate, there'll be no living with her."

"In all the relations of mankind to each other," said I, "those who *will* submit *must.*"

"Aye," cried Goldacre, "and all

fair too; but I must submit, whether I will or no."

"If you would not, she must."

"But then there would be no bearing her."

"If you cannot bear her ill-humours, you must submit to them; that is the only alternative: but if she found that they made no impression upon you, she would controul them herself. This temper is inherent in us from our cradle. Take a child of two years old. He knows he ought to obey you; deprive him of his plaything, he will cry; soothe him, he will cry the louder; but go where he is sure you cannot hear him, he will give over. He does not cry for his own amusement, but for the pleasure of giving you pain. Your wife, however, has great penetration. If you only pretend not to regard her, she will find you out,

and draw your chains the tighter; if you can really bring yourself not to heed her lashes, they will fall hurtless to the ground, and you are free. If I were partial to my own sex, as you once thought me, I would not have given you such a clue to escape our tyranny; but I am an advocate for justice, whether it be to man or woman."

"Ah! ma'am. What a lucky hit it would have been if I'd had you instead of your niece! But I was bewitched by a pretty face; and she smiled and smiled, and I thought she loved me. And what is a pretty face, when one's used to it? and especially when the smiles are all for other people?"

"All you can now do," said I, "is to let Barbara have her way in every thing that is indifferent, or nearly so. Whenever she is absolutely wrong, op-

pose her with calmness and firmness, and be deaf to ill words, and blind to ill looks."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Goldacre, with a sigh; "I'm much obliged to you, ma'am, I'll try; but it's hard to learn a new lesson at threescore; and its always been my privilege to be in a passion myself, and nobody durst speak to *me*."

A few days after this, Barbara told her husband that she would go and see his new estate at Oatley. "By all means, my dear," replied he: "I will order the chariot, and go with you."

"Among your bundle of proverbs, Mr. Goldacre," said she, "did you never hear one about proffered service?"

"Yes, my dear," answered he, "but

it's twenty miles to Oatley, and perhaps you'd like to stay all night."

"Perhaps I might," returned she, "but that does not sweeten the offer. I shall not enter Mr. Caradine's house, while that girl is there; but I suppose there is an inn somewhere, is not there?"

"Yes, my dear," replied he, "there is a public-house, but it's above a mile off, and it's such a one as you would not like; but there's a very good farm-house upon the land, where we might lodge."

"That will do," said she. "But I have often told you of that abominable custom of yours of calling me your *dear*, every time you address me. It is odious. It is both fond and vulgar."

"As to being vulgar," said Goldacre, "to be sure I've known the time when

I might have been rather so than otherwise, for I was not always rich; but I don't see how a man worth two hundred thousand pound can be vulgar. However, if I don't behave quite like you old family gentlefolks, you saw what I was, and you shouldn't ha' had me, you could not expect to wash the blackamoor white. And as to being fond, matters are come to a pretty pass, if I am to be odious because I'm fond of you!"

"If ever one makes an observation," said Barbara, "it leads to these everlasting discussions. You said you would order the chariot; I wish you would ring the bell; I intend to go immediately. And, ma'am," added she, addressing herself to me, "we shall have the pleasure of dining with you to-morrow."

When they returned, Mrs. Goldacre

was in raptures with Oatley. "Mr. Goldacre," said she, with some good humour, "it is the sweetest place I ever saw; and there are half a dozen houses scattered about the country, which look as if they were inhabited by decent people. You shall build at Oatley; for I will positively live there."

"I beg your pardon, my dear," said he, "but I cannot build at Oatley."

"Why not?"

"Why, I have a reason for it that I must not tell any body; but it is such a one that I cannot get over it."

"Now, ma'am," said Barbara, "I appeal to you. Here is a man who pretends to be fond of me; as soon as I declare my inclination to reside at Oatley, he absolutely refuses it; and the reason is to be a secret. I have

neither his indulgence nor his confidence."

"And I'll be judged by Mr. Oakwood," said Goldacre; "he knows the reason, and let him say whether it is sufficient."

"I will enter into no dispute," said my brother to Barbara; "but I will give evidence on a fact. Mr. Goldacre might build a house at Oatley; but you would think it wrong yourself, if you knew his reason for not doing it."

"Then," said she to her husband, "I insist upon your telling me the reason."

"You must excuse me, my dear, I cannot."

"You prove that vile habit of yours a mockery. You call me your *dear*, and you use me barbarously. Instead of a friend, you treat me as an alien.

Do not say you *cannot*; say, at once, you *will not* trust me?"

"I'd rather not do that," said Goldacre.

"I insist upon it. If I am not to be favoured with your kindness, shew the extent of your unworthiness; shew yourself in your own ugly colours."

"Well, then," replied Goldacre, "since you must have it, I *will* not."

"You are upon a new plan," resumed his wife. "But do not think I shall take such usage patiently."

"I *don't* think it," said Goldacre; "I know you too well for that."

"Do not imagine," rejoined she, "that I will ever return to that country which bears coal and lime, instead of grass and corn; and whose rivulets run smoking hot from the engines. No, I like Oatley; and I will build a

house myself, and send the people to you to be paid."

"Perhaps you may read in the newspapers," said my brother, "*This is to forewarn all persons not to trust Barbara, the wife of me, William Goldacre.*"

"No," said she, "low-lived as he is, he dare not do that."

"You're right, my dear," said he, "I should not think of it."

Barbara has actually taken the bold step she threatened. She has sent for an architect; approved of a plan; and, as she has something of her uncle's expedition about her, the foundation of a noble mansion is now digging at Oatley.

LETTER LIII.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

MARGARET is returned to her father's. She looks pale, but not ill. She excuses herself altogether from coming to Oakwood Hall; both on account of revisiting the scene of the late melancholy event, and on account of meeting Barbara. The first of these objections I should endeavour to make her conquer if it were the only one, for it spares us many a pang to contemplate at once all that can remind us of a departed friend; but, for both their sakes, I would not have her encounter Barbara. I would

neither raise the vindictive ire of the one, nor hurt the wounded feelings of the other.

Margaret has resumed her pencil and her needle. "To these," she says, "after preventing every wish of my parents, and doing the little good I can in my narrow circle, I will devote my life. My power of doing good, indeed, and consequently my obligation to do it," added she, sighing, "are extended. It would be presumptuous in me ever more to think of marriage; for my love has been misfortune to both those on whom it was bestowed."

"You do not think with your usual justness, my dear Margaret," said I. "The misfortune of one of your lovers arose from his own mistake; that of the other was the visitation of God; and though it happened in consequence of his exertions to serve you, it was one of

those consequences that you could not foresee, and therefore cannot reasonably place to your own account. Had you requested poor Charles to sit on wet grass, and keep on damp clothes, great would be your cause of self-accusation; but Charles was under no obligation to forget his own safety in the care of yours; and the same thoughtlessness might have led to the same fatal event, after riding, shooting, or some other exercise in which you had no concern."

"It seems to me the particular ordination of the Almighty," replied she, "that two such remarkable circumstances should happen, when I was on the eve of marriage."

"The whole universe is under the direction of the Supreme Being," said I; "but you ought not to ascribe that to a particular interference of Provi-

dence, which may be accounted for by natural causes. You are giving way to superstition."

"I believe I am," returned she; "my mind is weakened: however, to view events in the light you do, I have done with love and marriage. To love again, would be as indelicate as to marry a third husband."

"I allow a woman no more than two," said I; "but yours is a particular case. If, like you, I consider the men to whom you had plighted your faith, as your husbands, your acquaintance with them was so short, and you are still so young, that a dispensation may be obtained in your favor."

"I should despise myself for such a thought," said Margaret.

"I do not say you *will* love a third time," said I; "I only think it possible."

"If I thought it possible," returned she, "I would avoid the sight of all mankind, for fear it should happen."

"You need not be in haste to do that," said I. "It will not happen at present, if ever. But we will end our controversy, lest I should think of that naughty woman, the Ephesian matron. Though, by the bye, I never thought her so bad as she is generally considered; she only preferred a 'living dog to a dead lion."

Poor Margaret is so disturbed at my possibilities, that, if she were a catholic, I have no doubt she would enter upon her noviciate immediately, to prevent their coming to pass.

Goldacre has a sincere regard for the lovely girl, and has visited her as often as he has dared to do it. Her affectionate heart and gentle manners have afforded him relief from the taunts of

his tyrant; but Barbara has watched him closely; and though she cares not for his company herself, she will not suffer him to bestow it on Margaret. Unhappy Barbara! for "God's good will is so," that the tormentor shall be self-tormented! Possessed of youth and beauty, she wanted only affluence. For that she sacrificed the rest; and has now the bitter reflection, that she has succeeded to a fortune which would have enabled her to choose, among youth, rank, and riches, of the other sex! Her only pleasure seems to be in watching the progress of her house. She has such a colony of men employed, that it is already raising its head out of the ground. She is true to her resolution of never returning into Lancashire, and has requested my brother's permission to pass the remainder of the summer at Oakwood; she has obtained from

her husband into a promise of taking a house in London for the winter, and is determined to make her new residence habitable by the summer following. She frequently goes to Oatley, for a day or two; Goldacre has taken her hint, and does not offer his company; she is too proud to ask it, and goes alone; and he has enjoyed his respite in the society of Margaret Freeman. He has profited so little by the instructions he received from me, that he has already given his wife more than two thousand pounds towards defraying the expence of building. On another occasion he has shewn greater resolution.

He entered the room yesterday. "Where have you been, Mr. Goldacre?" demanded she.

"I have been walking."

"Which way did you walk?"

"Towards the village."

"How far did you go?"

"A little way."

"You seem determined to evade my question."

"Why I a'n't a prentice lad, am I? that I can't go out for half an hour, without giving an account of myself?"

"The reason you decline giving an account of yourself is that you are ashamed of your company. You have been gossipping with that girl."

"What girl?"

"You know whom I mean; and you know what it costs me to pronounce her name. That little sly girl, Margaret Freeman; she who has the art to make all fools love her; but I see through her contrivances, and despise her as she deserves."

"My dear, you see a great way. I confess I understand no art, but the art of getting money; but to me her art

seems downright nature; and if none but fools love her, you're the only wise person in the creation."

"She has imposed upon wiser people than you," said Barbara; "but if you value my regard or my peace, I insist upon it that you speak to her no more! I come from Oatley, fatigued to death, in that horrid jolting carriage, and, instead of finding you here to receive me, you are comforting Margaret Freeman, for the loss of two lovers, who have each had a happy escape, and one of whom has rewarded her generously for pretended affection."

"Why, as to your regard for me," said Goldacre, "it's like the pancakes mixed with mustard, that I've heard my nephew talk of. They was so bad that nobody could eat 'em; and so, when a man swore a false oath by their goodness, he was not foresworn; and, I be-

lieve, I might swear a great lie by your regard for me, and my soul would be in no danger. And as for your peace, my dear, I should value it highly, if I knew where it was to be found; because, if you had any peace, I might hope for some myself; but I believe you gave it all away, when you changed your name to Goldacre."

"Too true I did!" said Barbara. "What peace can I ever know, with an old, illiterate, vulgar creature, who has no merit upon earth but his money."

"Yes," said Goldacre, "I've another merit; and that is, I'm good-natured; if I wasn't, I am sure I should thump you."

"Did ever mortal hear any thing like this?" cried Barbara. "A blacksmith could do no more! You are a

man I can have no hope of; unless it be the hope of getting rid of you!"

"My dear," said Goldacre, "I would not have you build too much upon that. If the old *must* go, the young *may* go, and you may fret yourself to death, while I sit by quietly, in my arm-chair, and look on. Here's my chariot! twelve months ago, when you wanted to be its mistress, it was elegant, and easy, and all that was good; and now it's horrid, and jolting, and not fit to carry you. And since you've put me upon my mettle, I'd have you to know I'll visit Margaret Freeman whenever I've a mind; and if you don't behave as you ought, I won't come back again!"

Now, thought I, is the critical moment. What comes next? "Ungrateful man," cried Barbara! "Is this the

return for my love! Have I deserved this at your hands for preferring you to all your sex! But women are born to yield, and men to play the tyrant!"

And the gentle Barbara melted into tears! Goldacre was softened. He almost wept, for company. "Don't cry, my dear!" said he: "don't cry! I can't bear to see you cry! I'll do any thing to comfort you."

"Then, my dear Mr. Goldacre," said she, "never go again to Margaret Freeman. I cannot endure the thoughts of that pitiful deceitful girl."

Mr. Goldacre visits Margaret Freeman no more.

Goldacre and I were strolling in the park this morning, when we met my brother returning from his work, attended by a sweet pretty boy, about ten years of age, dressed in a waggoner's

frock, and who seemed to be very familiar with him.

"You are not the only person," said my brother to Goldacre, "whom my labour has introduced me to; this young gentleman and I are brothers of the spade. He will either be a great man, or be hanged; and to keep him out of the way of the latter part of his destiny, I shall take him into my service. The first business I shall employ you in," said he, turning to the boy, "is to go to that great house, and inquire for the butler; tell him that you are his fellow-servant, and that he must send a glass of wine and water by you to his master. You will find me under this tree."

We seated ourselves under a spreading oak, and the child set out on his errand, saying, "Gom! uffi wurk at this

ra.ut, I shall have a haysier place nur my maaster!"

"Pray," said I, "what language is that?"

"The Warwickshire," replied my brother. "The mother of this little fellow," continued he, "is the daughter of a labourer of the next village, who, having married a soldier, settled with him in that county; and coming over, lately, with her son, has left him under the care of his grandfather. The ground I am preparing for my new plantation lies at the extremity of the park, and this boy has been weeding in the next field for a farmer with whom he lives. A few days ago, observing the boy very lazy, I called out, and asked him why he did not mind his work. He answered, in the dialect of his country, 'Becoz I haan't got no drink.'

"'You do not look for it,' said I. 'The bottle is on the other side that heap of dung.' The boy threw down his fork, and spent half an hour in looking for the bottle. Weary at last, he gave over the search; and, coming to the pales, bawled out, 'I cawnt find no bottle; it aynt theur.'

"'I tell you,' said I, 'it is on the other side the dung-heap; but you look too near it.' The lad took a wider circuit; but as fruitless as the former, and coming again to the pales, cried, 'I b'lieve yonne funnin me. It ma' be o'tother side the muck sype, an as for awf as aouer church steeple!'

"'Aye,' said I, 'you have hit the mark now. It is in your master's kitchen. I saw him take it away.'

"'Then,' said the lad, 'my maaster may come and ta-ak the fawrk; for by Gosh it wunt dew no wurk. I wunder,'

continued he, 'haow yo dun to wurk so, uthout drink; but I reckon yo maakin it aout, aater you gooin whom. I s'pose yome drunk every night. Yo wurkin so ard, yo mun get a mortal jell o' money. Yo maakin seven days a wick, dont you?'

"'I work all hours,' replied I.

"'Aw,' said the lad, 'and I dar to say yome well paid faur it; else yo would n't, no moor nur other folks.'

"As we continued neighbours, we became very intimate; and this morning I asked the boy if he would drive plough for me. Having once been imposed upon, he guarded against deceit. 'Drive plaough for yo, hay?' said he: 'yone got never a tayme.'

"'You are mistaken,' said I. 'Do you see the team in yonder field?'

"'Aw,' said the lad.

"'That is mine,' said I.

"'Aw,' says he, 'it aynt a thatt'n nayther. I baynt so big a fewl as yo thinkin faur. I knowin you naow; I'm up to your rigs.'

"'What would you say,' demanded I, seeing William at some distance, 'if I were to tell you that man in the laced hat is my servant?'

"'Aw,' said the lad, 'yo cawnt come over me no moor; yo moant think it.'

"'William!' said I. The man advanced hastily, and, touching his hat, said 'Sir!'

"'What think you now?' said I.

"'Why yo baynt a gentlemun, bin you?' said the boy, astonished at what he saw.

"'Indeed I am reckoned one,' replied I, 'and all these men will tell you so.'

"'Well,' said the boy, 'I daynt

think it! I'll be day'd uf yo wurkin like a gentlemun, haowsomdever; for yo wurkin arder nur a poor mon!'"

The boy now returned with the wine and water. "You did not know Mr. Oakwood, did you?" said I.

"No, I daynt at fust," answered he; "but I knowin 'im naow; an e's a rum on!"

"The very devil would not know him," said Goldacre, "if he was sent o' purpose to fetch him! I hardly know him myself; though he is my own uncle in law."

"But, perhaps," said I to the child, "you do not wish to leave your present service? You like the place you have?"

"No, Gosh dock it," said the boy, "it aynt o' thatt'n; my place is nothin to crack on, I'll promise you."

"Have not you a good master and mistress?"

"Why, tha maaster an tha mississ am middlinish well like; they gi'm me plenty o' vittle, spewn mate, an biled mate, an my grammy hur gi's me opple paasty; but hower dairy-maid's a sad Mollwollups, uth her cap welly awlus asid'n, an uf tha kaows baynt fot up tew a minnit, hur drums my hide shamefully. An hower wagginer's a great yawnups, as big as a hoak tree, an he ma-aks me dew tha awsiz wile he does nothin at all, an then 'e says e'll pun my boo-ans. An theere's a lad as aynt much bigger nor I are, as gi's me some of 'is sauce; but 'e darcent gi me much, coz 'e knows I can leather 'im."

I give you this as a specimen of a dialect which you possibly may not

have heard; and I think you will agree with me that Warwickshire is not inferior to Yorkshire itself, in its abuse of the English language.

I have now given you a specimen of the different dialects of Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Warwickshire; and if a number of persons, from Northumberland to Cornwall, were each to contribute what he was qualified to supply of the remaining thirty-seven counties; the two extremes would be united by imperceptible gradations, and the whole would present a curious picture of the corruptions of our language.

LETTER LIV.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

I WAS sitting yesterday at John Freeman's, with Margaret; Mrs. Goldacre at Oatley, and sure not to return till to-day; and her husband, in defiance of his promise, with us; when the door opened, and Millichamp entered! Margaret sunk back in her chair, and fainted. He sprang forward, almost overturning his uncle in his way, and took her in his arms.

"How could you be so thoughtless?" said I. "See what mischief you have done!"

"Unfortunate that I am!" exclaimed

he, "I either think wrong, or not till it is too late! But how could I imagine my sudden appearance would now have had any effect upon Margaret?"

He placed her on the lang settle, and stood at a distance. She recovered by degrees; but could not look on Millichamp without emotion. He perceived some traces of resentment on her countenance. "I do not ask to be forgiven," cried he. "I do not now even ask to be heard; though that is a favour I will solicit another time."

"But I think you ought to ask forgiveness, and of me too," said Goldacre; "for you'd like to have knocked me down! and I fretted sadly when you went, though, to be sure, I married soon after, and then I'd something else to fret at; and I'm heartily glad, now you're come back, and you take no notice of *me*."

"Pardon me, sir," said Millichamp; "I am not myself; and never can I be myself, when I forget your kindness, and the gratitude I owe you."

"When you recollect those who love you, Millichamp," said I, "you will think of me."

"Never shall I cease to think of you with love and veneration," replied he.

"Mrs. Freeman," said I, "you shall give us our tea; and then we will hear what this young man can say in his own defence; for if Margaret has no curiosity, you and I have.

John Freeman now entered, and expressed great surprise and satisfaction at seeing Millichamp. During tea Margaret wholly recovered; but though she never opened her lips, I could see the demon, as somebody has

called curiosity, sitting on her face, accompanied by a little gloom. When the tea equipage was removed, "Now, Millichamp," said I, "why did you leave us? where have you been? what have you been doing? and what has brought you back?"

"I left," replied Millichamp, "because I believed Margaret had given herself to another; and you shall judge whether my evidence were sufficient to warrant such belief. Not knowing that either she or Mr. Charles Oakwood was at the farm-house, I went thither to inquire after the man who had hurt his leg. I heard Mr. Charles say, in the parlour, 'You cannot be so romantic as to hesitate a moment between me and Millichamp, now you have it in your power to choose!'—'Most certainly I cannot,' were the emphatic words I heard from Margaret in

return. Words which can never be erased from my memory! Without reflection, I attempted to enter the room, and found the door locked. I then gave up all for lost, and instantly left the house.

"Allow me to interrupt you a moment," said I; "*Most certainly I cannot,* was an equivocal expression. Might it not imply that she preferred you to Charles? and might not Charles have locked the door without Margaret's consent?"

"To me it had all the air of a concerted meeting," replied Millichamp; "and I had no doubt, from the manner of the woman of the house, that she was privy to it. I entered Mr. Oakwood's gardens by the back-door, and, going into the root-house, I threw myself on the bench. The questions you have now asked were doubts

which then entered my mind; and as I was weighing them, and thinking I had yet a hope, I heard Mr. Charles Oakwood ask his uncle's consent to marry Margaret; I heard Mr. Oakwood mention her engagement to myself as an objection; I heard Mr. Charles positively affirm that she had given me up, for him. After this, could I doubt? After this, what remained? To stay, and see Margaret forfeit every title to my esteem; to see her the wife of another; or to fly. *My* Margaret, the Margaret I had once known, would have despised me, if I had not chosen the latter."

Margaret's countenance cleared up, and her open heart, as usual, shone through it. "I am forewoman of the jury," said I, "and I pronounce you, not guilty."

"As soon as I could leave the room

house unobserved," continued Millichamp, "I ordered my horse, and quitted Oakwood, as I believed, for ever. My mind was occupied by one object. I perceived nothing around me, till my horse stopped, and I saw that it was dark. He had been my guide into the yard of the inn at which we had rested first, on our journey to Arrowby Lodge, and last, on our return from thence. This circumstance determined my course. My only wish was to renounce the world, after having been so cruelly deceived by her who had appeared to me the most sincere and artless being in it; and one of the secluded vales of Cumberland seemed as proper a place as any. I now first recollected that I had received a hundred pound note from my tenant in Kent, a few days before, and that I had it in my pocket."

"And pray," said Goldacre, "where did you find a shirt? for the housemaid said you took only that upon your back."

"I did not discover the want of a shirt till two days after," replied Millichamp, "when I bought one ready made. I passed a night," continued he, "in which my reflections were not interrupted by sleep. My eyes seemed opened; and I wondered at my former blindness. I saw a thousand instances of the love of Mr. Charles Oakwood for Margaret, which had not struck me before; her change, therefore, was not sudden. If she had not returned his love, she would have disclosed it to me; or, at least, have repelled it. Succeeding nights I passed in earnest endeavours to forget what I never could lose sight of for a moment. Regardless of my way, I

rode over moors and fells, till I arrived in Westmorland by a circuitous route, and even entered one of its vales in an opposite direction from that which I had taken at first. Exhausted by anxiety and fatigue, want of sleep and of food, I stopped at a decent farm-house, situated to my wish; and, two days after, I was taken ill of a fever. I requested that the clergyman of the parish might be sent for; and, in confidence, I told him my name, and the address of my uncle; to whom I begged him to give an account of my death, in case it should happen.

"I long struggled with sickness. As my frame grew weaker, the emotions of my mind subsided; and, standing on the brink of eternity, even the image of Margaret became more faint. When I recovered, it was not

sophy, a contempt for the insignificant bustle of the creatures of a day; but the fact was, I dreaded to hear of the marriage of Mr. Charles Oakwood and Margaret.

"My life was now a scene of calm, unvaried repose; when, one day, absorbed in my own reflections, I, unawares, reached the top of a mountain, and saw Ingleborough. I started. I had once contemplated that noble mountain, as marking the residence of my love. I had long avoided all that could relate to her, and I had been at ease; I now burst upon an object associated with her idea, as faithful and affectionate, and my soul was in tumults. The charm was broken. Unable to bear my situation, I resolved to brave my fate, and seek the truth from Miss Caradine.

"I arrived at Oatley yesterday even-

ing, determined not to enter the gates; and I sent to beg the favour of speaking to Miss Caradine, as I stood by my horse. From her I learned that Margaret had been on the point of marriage with Mr. Charles Oakwood; and that their union had been prevented by his sudden death. The first part of her intelligence was only a repetition of what had driven me from Oakwood; the latter part was unexpected. She added, that Margaret had been with her nearly three months, in consequence of the melancholy event, and had left her, much recovered in health and spirits. In vain did she press me to enter the house. In vain did she assure me Margaret's love for me was undiminished when I quitted Oakwood. I fancied I had formerly believed too much, and I steeled my heart against

conviction; but she talked of Margaret, and how could I leave! The clock struck nine, and roused me, and I was bidding her farewell. 'Now,' said she, 'you shall not go. You are fifteen miles from the town you mean to sleep at on your return, and you shall not quit Oatley to-night.' She called a servant to take my horse, and I followed her into the house. Dear Miss Caradine! what do I owe you! When we were seated, she acknowledged that, finding she could not prevail upon me to stay, she had continued to speak of Margaret, as the spell by which she could hold me, till it should be too late to go. 'And now,' said she, 'I will shew you a proof of Margaret's fidelity that would convince an unbeliever.' She then gave me a letter * which she had received from Margaret at the time of my departure,

* See Letter 36.

containing an account of my fatal mistake, and her sufferings in consequence of it.

"To describe my emotions now were impossible, when my folly and my loss stared me in the face.—I come to know," added he, with quivering lips, "whether your forgiveness be equal to your truth—whether you will again be *my* Margaret?"

Margaret had listened to this recital with cheeks alternately red and pale; and as Millichamp painted the strength of his feelings, I was more than once afraid she would have fainted again. She now held out her hand, and burst into tears.

Goldacre got up, and sung, and capered about the room; and going up to John Freeman, "Now, old boy," said he, "the time is come when thou and I may shake hands; and many's the good day I have wished for it."

John Freeman shook Goldacre's hand heartily, and prayed God to bless both his children.

"But," said Goldacre to his nephew, recollecting himself, "did'st meet ever a she-dragon in thy way to-day."

"She-dragon, sir!" repeated Millichamp.

"Aye," replied his uncle; "thou used to know her by the name of Barbara Oakwood; but thou must call her Goldacre now, to my sorrow."

"Miss Caradine told me, sir, that you had married Miss Oakwood," said Millichamp; "and I wish you joy."

"Ah! that's all over long ago," said Goldacre; "it didn't last a month! She'll spit fire rarely, when she knows thou'rt returned, and going to be married to Margaret; but I shall match her, for all that. She went to Oatley this morning, where she's building a

fine house, and she's in a plaguy hurry to get it done."

"I came through the river," said Millichamp.

"It's well thou did'st," replied his uncle; "or she'd ha' snapped at thee; but I'll try if I can't muzzle her by and by."

"Cowards only boast," said I, smiling.

"Then I'll say no more," cried Goldacre; "*seeing's believing*."

LETTER LV.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

THE evening after I wrote last, Mrs. Goldacre, on her return from Oatley, found Millichamp with us. He approached her respecfully. She started, changed colour, and received his congratulations with some confusion.

"I was very much surprised to see my nephew come straggling in, the night before last," said Mr. Goldacre.

"Straggling in where?" demanded his wife.

Goldacre hesitated; and at length said, "Into John Freeman's."

"Mr. Goldacre," returned she, "your fondness for that girl has made me miserable; and, in pity to my distress, you promised to follow her no longer."

"Hey day!" cried Goldacre, "what's in the wind now! to be sure I did promise I'd go no more, when you roared and made such a noise about it; but you can't imagine I went with any ill design, can you?"

"I think," answered Barbara, "when married men go after girls, it is with no good design."

Millichamp bit his lip; but respect for his uncle kept him silent.

"O fye, O fye!" cried Goldacre, "what will this world come to! I knew you were a bad on'; but I couldn't have believed this of you! Why,

Margaret is going to be married to my nephew."

"That is a proof of your nephew's boasted good-nature," said Barbara, reddening with vexation; "but no excuse for your visits to Margaret."

"Barbara," said my brother, "I am ashamed of your scandulous insinuations. They recoil upon your own head. You have conceived a mortal hatred to an innocent young woman; because she pleases every body else. Your defamation stains the tongue that utters it; but cannot touch Margaret."

"I can only say," returned Barbara, "that if there were no foundation for these suspicions, it is very unfortunate for Mr. Goldacre that he should have been so fond of visiting Margaret Freeman, and should have chosen those times for it when I was absent

from Oakwood. Yes," continued she, addressing herself to her husband, "I am well informed of your proceedings. The moment I was gone, you were at Freeman's. I once implored you with tears to renounce that disturber of my peace; you pretended to be touched by my sorrow, and promised to do so; and now I find you are with her again."

"Richard," said Goldacre, "this vixen wants to breed mischief between you and Margaret; and she is raising a parcel of confounded lies for that purpose; and yet they come so near the truth, that I hardly know how to contradict her."

"I have stated facts," said Barbara, "which cannot be contradicted."

"Richard," said Goldacre, "I do love thy Margaret; she's kind and gentle, and she loves me."

"I think," interrupted Barbara, "if accusation be not proof, confession may be reckoned such."

"Don't mind that Jezebel," continued Goldacre, "but hear me out. It was very likely that I should visit Margaret when I loved her; and no harm neither; but my help-mate's like the dog in the manger; she neither likes my company herself, nor likes any body else should have it; and so, to keep her from growling, I chose to go when she wasn't here. And as to that affair she mentions, she tried to bully me; and when she could not manage me by foul means, she tried fair, and wheedled and cried, and I was fool enough to yield, and promise I'd go to Freeman's no more. But she'd no jealous whimsies then; those are only come to set you against Margaret. And I'd have kept my word,

and stayed away, if that would have contented her; but she's neither quiet full nor fasting. Catch me at minding her sniveling again!"

"Barbarian!" exclaimed Mrs. Goldacre. "Heroes, statesmen, snd philosophers have been moved by woman's tears; it is only such a groveling soul as thine that can withstand them."

"Aye, aye," said Goldacre, "I played the hero and philosopher, myself, once; but it was when I thought your tears were tears of tenderness: I know 'em now; they're tears of spite."

"Such usage," exclaimed Barbara, would change the sweetness of the dove to bitterness!"

"Let me intreat you, sir," said Millichamp, "not to irritate Mrs. Goldacre. Nothing upon earth can again alter my opinion of Margaret."

Mrs. Goldacre's wrath now turned from her husband to his nephew. "My brother's folly," said she, "has prevented you from starving with your Margaret; has prevented her from washing her own linen and dressing her own victuals; but be assured I shall take care that your uncle's folly does not add to your fortune."

"I have had scruples in my own mind," said Millichamp, whether I should accept the noble legacy of your late brother; but when I considered it as a tribute paid to the worth of my Margaret by the man whom she had consented to marry, I thought I ought not to refuse it. If the whole of my uncle's possessions can conciliate your love, may they be withheld from me, for so desirable a purpose."

"Thou'rt a good lad, Richard," replied his uncle; "and since thou'rt

so easily satisfied, I think, I shall give thee no more at present, than will finish building thy house."

"What house, sir?" said Millichamp. "I do not understand you."

"No," said he, "thou dost not know that thy aunt, here, spends all her time and money in building thee a grand house at Oatley; and that all her pleasure upon this earth is to get it ready for thee. To be sure it will be rather too big for thee yet; but thou must make shift with it; and when I'm gone, thou may'st fill it."

Millichamp and I gazed at Goldacre with astonishment; my brother smiled; and Barbara exclaimed, while doubt and terror were painted in her countenance, "What do you mean? such wit is above my comprehension!"

"Why, my dear," answered Goldacre, "a little bird whispered to me

before my marriage, that you was something like what I've found you; only, to be sure, not quite so bad. I didn't believe it; but, however, thinks I to myself, I don't know what *may* be hid under that pretty red and white, and I don't know but I *may* turn out a sneaking old dotard, and I should not like to leave my poor lad a beggar, if ever he comes back, and *safe bind, safe find:* so, for fear of the worst, I made over the Oatley estate to Mr. Oakwood, in trust for Richard, in such a manner that I couldn't undo it myself. Now you must own, my dear, you've been fairly treated; for I told you I couldn't build at Oatley; no more I could, without I built on my nephew's land; and here's Mr. Oakwood, he told you you'd repent it; but you wouldn't be advised; however, my nephew's much obliged to you."

Barbara's rage at this information is not to be imagined. She scolded, wept, and raved; and, at last, threw herself into a violent hysteric fit. I was frightened; Millichamp ran to support her. "Stand off!" cried Goldacre, "and leave me to manage my own wife! I've got a receipt from a wise woman, and *I'll* cure her o' the *sterics*." He rang the bell for her maid. "Here," says he, "do you take care of your mistress, and see that she wants for nothing. And now, gentleman, and you, ma'am," turning to us, "I invite you all to John Freeman's.

Goldacre was marching off, in triumph, and we were preparing to follow in his train, when Barbara started up.

"And can you leave me thus, "she cried?" Once you loved me; can you let me supplicate in vain?"

"Aye, that I can," answered he. "*Old birds are not to be caught with chaff;* at least they're not to be caught twice."

"Monster!" cried Barbara! "know that I despise you, and despise myself for condescending to be called by your name."

"*I* might have thought better of you," said Goldacre, "if you had not had that condescension; I'm sure it has never been any advantage to me. But whether you coax or call names, i'ts all one; for I know you too well to heed you a pinch of snuff, and I hate snuff as bad as brimstone."

We then left the afflicted wife to the consolation of her maid, and supped at John Freeman's. The next day she did not make her appearance; and to our repeated inquiries after her health, the answer was, "Very ill." The

second day we were told that she was worse; the third, she requested to see me. As I entered her apartment, she burst into tears. "Oh! ma'am," cried she, "I am undone! instead of a husband, I have given myself to an implacable tyrant!"

"Barbara," said I, "you are trifling away your own happiness, and, if you go one step further, it will be irrecoverable. You have committed a great error, in marrying a man you could not love; but he has some points in his character you may respect; and, if you cannot make an affectionate wife, you ought to make a prudent one."

"How is he affected by my illness, ?" demanded she.

"As he ought to be," replied I. "He knows, that part of it which is real, you have brought upon yourself,

and he heeds it not. You have only to pursue your present plan a little longer, and his tenderness will be past recall."

"You would not have me submit to him, would you?" said she.

"Certainly," answered I. "Submission is a virtue, when we have been in fault."

"Submit to such a man as he!" exclaimed Barbara.

"You have made the man your husband," said I "and you owe him the duty of a wife; besides, he requires nothing of you which is unreasonable."

"Then what would you have me do, ma'am? demanded she.

"Dine with us to-day," replied I; "and treat your husband with respect and kindness."

"I will dine with you," said she; "since you think it right; but, as for

the respect and kindness, they are absolutely unattainable."

At dinner, Barbara shewed that my admonitions were not wholly thrown away; she did not treat her husband with disdain and rudeness; and that was a great point gained. When the servants had left the room, "My dear," said Mr. Goldacre, addressing his wife, "you seem in a better humour than you was three days ago, and I hope you'll listen to reason. If I propose any thing unreasonable, here's Mr. and Mrs. Oakwood, your own uncle and aunt; they are but my uncle and aunt in law: I desire neither favour nor affection: let them speak."

After this preamble, Mr. Goldacre continued, "To be sure, I did love you very sincerely; or why should I have married you? It could not be for your

fortune; for that I gave you: but you have led me a dog's life, till flesh and blood can't bear it, and love itself can hold out no longer. If you have really any regard for me, shew me some respect, and don't for ever thwart and plague me; ride in my jolting carriage, go back to my black trees and boiling waters, and entertain your nephew and niece, when they come to visit us; and you shall eat gold, or bank notes, which is the same thing now gold is gone, as well as wear it. If you don't like me, say so honestly; you can't help it, and I'll forgive you; and I'll allow you five hundred pounds a year, and you shall never trouble me any more."

"Surely," said Barbara, "I can command the estates which were my brother's; and if I were to accept the latter part of your proposition, you

ought to allow me the house and lands at Oatley."

"The house and lands at Oatley, I told you before," said Goldacre, "are not my own. I've no more right in them than Tom Tinker; but I called upon counsellor Clearcase yesterday, and he tells me the rents of your brother's estates are my own, during your life; and so I will not part with one shilling."

"At least," said Barbara, "you must allow me my jointure, which is two thousand pounds a year."

"I don't see why I must pay you handsomely for not fulfilling your duty as a wife," said Goldacre. "Five hundred a year will keep you from dabbling in soap-suds and broiling beef-steaks, and that's enough. However, I'm good-natured, or you'd never have used me as you have done, and, per-

haps, I may give you something more. Will you take time to consider of it?"

"No," replied Barbara:" whatever be my faults, hypocrisy is not of the number. As I know my own mind, I cannot keep you in suspense. I despise you, I hate your nephew, and I detest the girl who is to be his wife; I accept your five hundred pounds a year, and throw myself upon your generosity for what more you will allow me."

"That's honest, however," said Goldacre, "and thou hast never spoke a prettier word since thou promised to love, honour, and obey me. Gi' me thy hand, and I'll double thy allowance."

Barbara saw her husband no more. He gave her a draught on his banker for 500 l. in advance, and generously made her a present of the jolting chariot, and the horses which drew it.

The next day she set out for her mother's; and as he saw the carriage roll from the door, he cried, "Fare thee well, and joy go with thee! a thorn thou hast been in my side this many a day! If we'd patched up a peace, it could not have lasted; for *what's bred in the bone can never be out of the flesh!*"

LETTER LVI.

TO MRS. BRUDENELL.

Oakwood.

FROM the time that Millichamp returned, and Margaret consented to be his, she had always believed that something would happen, to interrupt her marriage. When pressed by him to name a time for it, "Millichamp," said she; "though it is my fervent wish to pass the remainder of my days with you, I cannot persuade myself that blessing is in store for me, and I dare not say when I will meet you at the altar. If the day, if the

hour were to arrive without accident, I should almost look round the church, like Cecilia, to see what would happen to prevent the ceremony."

Millichamp combated her melancholy forebodings in vain; love and reason, united, were not strong enough to overcome them. He consulted me; and this morning, at six o' clock, I went into Margaret's chamber. "Come!" said I; "love need not stay for pomp and preparation; rise and be married."

"Married!" repeated she, starting up in bed, with her eyes wide open; "you never trifled with my feelings before!"

"What!" said I, "you love Millichamp, and you will neither be married in haste, nor at leisure! I assure you that this is your wedding-day, fixed by Mr. Goldacre, and known to every

body, but yourself, for this fortnight past. I heard Millichamp walking two hours ago, and I shall not leave you till you are his wife. Anson is below, with your bridal dress, which I beg you will accept from me; and when you have recovered from your surprise, she shall come up and assist you."

"You are very kind," said Margaret, and burst into tears. I was not sorry to see it, and I let her weep till she recovered of herself. "My love," said I, when she had done weeping, "your superstitious fears would have converted this whole fortnight into misery, had you known what was to happen at the end of it. I have spared you this; but I could not spare you a sudden shock also. That over, I hope you will exert yourself for the short time which remains. It is a

duty you owe the man of your choice, to go through the ceremony that makes you his, with steadiness."

"I will do so, indeed," said the sweet girl. "I am ashamed of myself."

Anson was now called up, and performed her office. Margaret looked lovely as—an angel, I was going to say; but "what know we of angels?" You will have a better idea of her, when I tell you she was a most beautiful and interesting young woman.

When we came down stairs we found assembled John and Mrs. Freeman, my brother, Mr. Goldacre, and Millichamp. Margaret's face and neck crimsoned over; Millichamp looked delighted; and Goldacre appeared in a new white wig, of his former fashion.

We sat down to breakfast; and, as soon as it was over, the carriages

drew up to the little garden-gate. "Margaret," said my brother, "thou hast my kindest wishes; but I hate parade, and I shall not go with thee to church. I went on the same occasion to give away my niece, and it had been better then if I had stayed at home."

"Aye," cried Goldacre, "better if we'd all stayed. This day twelvemonth I must run my neck into a halter; but I've slipped it, and that's more than many a one can say that it has sorely galled. I've turned off master Brutus too, for he's been a deuced unlucky fellow to me. Not that I've any more faith in luck than I have in the Pope; I always say, *Good luck's good care*; and there's a proverb of my own making. Here, people say I'm a lucky man, because I've got a great deal of money! Why, I've been an industrious, careful man, and had a spirit to push forward in the

world; that's all. Many a one would not have chose the same day for their nephew's wedding as their own, when theirs had proved so unlucky; but I did it on purpose. The luck's in the woman; not in the day! I could get rich where my nephew would starve; but he'll be drawn by a silken cord, and I was tugged by a rope."

John Freeman, dressed in a suit of full-buttoned brown, of thirty years standing, which had never seen the light but on solemn days, set off to the church, on foot. I wished him to go with his daughter and me; but he had never been in a carriage in his life, and the whole universe could not have persuaded him to enter one. I took Margaret, and Millichamp and his uncle followed in a splendid chariot, which Goldacre had new from London to grace his nephew's marriage.

When we entered the church, Mar-

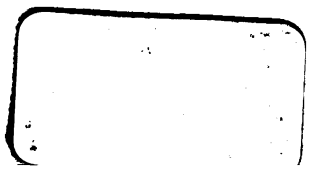
garet looked terrified; but she recollected herself, and went through the ceremony with composure. Her husband took her to Oakwood Hall, whither Goldacre and I followed, and where her mother was waiting to embrace her. I took her in my arms, in my turn; for dearly do I love her; and, as I wished her joy, she said, "Tell me, am I really the wife of Millichamp? for I know not how to believe it."

"You are, you are," he cried, as he entered; "and may Almighty Goodness only bless me, while I do all that a frail mortal can to render you a happy wife?"

"And me," returned she, "while I faithfully endeavour to discharge the duties of one!"

Mr. and Mrs. Millichamp are to remain with her father till their own house is ready to receive them. Mr.

Goldacre would have made some addition to John Freeman's, for the accommodation of his nephew; but it had been the mansion of his forefathers, and John would not allow one stone or tile to be altered or added. Mr. Goldacre will not entirely give up his black smoke, for he is not certain that he could breathe without it; but he looks to Millichamp and Margaret for the comfort of his declining days. The ensuing winter we shall all assemble round my brother's fire-side; and as the succeeding winters will find me only on the other side of his park pales, and the Millichamps at the distance of twenty miles, we shall often be the guests of OAKWOOD HALL.

THE END.

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